



National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance

4630 Churchill Street, #1
St. Paul, MN 55126
Phone: 651.484.3888 Fax: 651.638.0756
nafa@alfalfa.org
www.alfalfa.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Beth Nelson, President

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ALFALFA OFFERS LIVESTOCK FEED ADVANTAGES ON PP ACRES

St. Paul, MN – With forage shortages throughout much of the nation, farmers considering crop options for prevented plant acres should look to alfalfa.

According to RMA, farmers have options when planting alfalfa on prevented plant acres. They can plant it as a cover crop and manage it accordingly or they can plant it as a 2020 crop. With the 2020 crop scenario, the farmer has options: don't insure the alfalfa; insure it under a 2020 forage seeding policy (no 2019 cutting option), or insure it under a 2021 forage production policy.

Alfalfa provides much needed ground cover and many other beneficial attributes that should be considered when deciding what to plant on PP acres. "It's hard to find a crop that is more beneficial to the soil and environment than alfalfa," said Craig Sheaffer, University of Minnesota forage agronomist. "In addition to providing the most protein-per-acre, alfalfa reduces soil erosion and improves soil structure, moisture holding capacity, and nutrient content. It also increases beneficial soil biota, suppresses weeds, provides habitat for beneficial predatory insects, facilitates crop pollinators, and provides wildlife habitat." Sheaffer says alfalfa provides energy savings as well by adding nitrogen to the soil, thereby reducing the need to apply fertilizer.

If farmers plant alfalfa for 2020 production, which can be planted as early as July 1 in some regions, and choose not to insure the crop: *there are no planting date or harvest restrictions*; and it is considered a first crop, regardless of insurance coverage, for the 2020 crop year. There will be no impact to the 2019 prevented plant payment.

"With the severe shortage of hay, alfalfa is a crop farmers should strongly consider planting," said Beth Nelson, President of the National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance. "Planting alfalfa on prevented plant acres will provide farmers with high-quality forage early next spring which is critical coming off a year of forage shortages." If a cutting is needed in fall 2019, farmers could consider forgoing the forage seeding insurance.

In some areas of the country, farmers need to apply for a written agreement for a fall-seeded forage seeding policy, and should consult their crop insurance agent to establish the request (due dates vary by region).

For an RMA FAQ on planting alfalfa on prevented plant acres, please visit:

<https://www.rma.usda.gov/News-Room/Frequently-Asked-Questions/Prevented-Planting-and-Alfalfa>