



NAFA & THE ALFALFA INDUSTRY... LEADING THE WAY ON COEXISTENCE

In October 2007, during the injunction on the sale of Roundup Ready® alfalfa (RRA), NAFA held a coexistence strategy meeting to create a plan for peaceful coexistence among GE, organic, and conventional alfalfa producers. The meeting brought together more than 70 researchers, industry representatives, regulators, and producers.

Following the meeting, a steering committee, consisting of producers and industry experts, met to refine the contributions of the event's participants into a comprehensive strategy. In 2008, the NAFA board adopted four documents as a result of the meeting:

- *Best Management Practices for RRA Seed Production*
- *Coexistence for Alfalfa Hay Export Markets*
- *Coexistence for Alfalfa Seed Export Markets*
- *Coexistence for Organic Alfalfa Seed and Hay Markets*

The documents are intended to be dynamic and are reviewed annually by the NAFA board for possible enhancements. In addition, the *BMP for RRA Seed Production* calls for an annual third party analysis of data submitted by NAFA member seed contractors. The analysis is conducted by a committee of Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) representatives to help monitor the efficacy of the BMP and to make recommendations for modifications when necessary. To date, the conclusion of these reviews support retention of the current isolation standards in the BMP.

Fast Forward to Today...

With the deregulation of RRA in January 2011, NAFA recognized the need to enhance and expand its coexistence efforts beyond its original documents. A new coexistence committee was established and writing teams assembled to conduct an in depth review of the *BMP for RRA Seed Production* and to draft three new coexistence documents:

- *Best Management Practices for Adventitious Presence-Sensitive Alfalfa Seed Production*
- *Coexistence Principles & Glossary of Terms*
- *Grower Opportunity Zones for Seed Production*

In addition, the *Coexistence for Alfalfa Hay Export Markets*, *Coexistence for Alfalfa Seed Export Markets* and *Coexistence for Organic Alfalfa Seed and Hay Markets* documents are currently under a review and are expected to be brought to the NAFA board for adoption of the revisions in the next month.

While these documents may not prevent all disputes within the alfalfa community relating to the production of organic, AP-sensitive, conventional, and RRA, they do provide a framework within which peaceful coexistence can be achieved with good faith efforts among all participants. NAFA will continue to add to and enhance its coexistence documents moving forward in an effort to provide growers the freedom to grow the alfalfa of their choice, while still protecting sensitive markets.

Unique Model for Achieving Coexistence

The NAFA board adopted the *Grower Opportunity Zones for Seed Production* document at its June, 2011 board meeting. This concept offers a unique opportunity for achieving coexistence.

- **AP-Sensitive GOZ.** This is a zone for seed production of APS alfalfa seed and conventional alfalfa seed. As outlined in *NAFA BMP for RRA Seed Production*, RRA seed production would not be allowed in an APS GOZ.
- **GE GOZ.** This is a zone for seed production of GE and conventional alfalfa seed that is destined for markets that are not APS. APS alfalfa seed production would not be practical in a GE GOZ. As outlined in *NAFA BMP for RRA Seed Production*, AOSCA certified seed production isolation requirements apply between GE and conventional seed within a GE GOZ. *NAFA BMP for RRA Seed Production* isolation requirements apply between a GE seed production field in a GE GOZ and the nearest conventional and/or APS seed production field outside the GOZ border.

To learn more about GOZs and other coexistence strategies, please visit the NAFA website at www.alfalfa-forage.org. The website also has a listing of GOZs that have been validated to date.

Grower Opportunity Zone (GOZ)

A GOZ is a seed grower defined geography within which a validated super-majority elect to focus production of either Adventitious Presence-Sensitive (APS) or Genetically Enhanced (GE) alfalfa seed (including RRA), facilitating meeting isolation requirements for these markets. In either zone, conventional AP-tolerant (APT) seed can be produced in accordance with applicable NAFA Best Management Practices (BMP) for that zone.

How to Establish a GOZ

Two or more growers must request to organize a NAFA validated GOZ. Request may be mailed, faxed, or scanned/ emailed to NAFA. The request must specify which type of GOZ is being requested (APS or GE) and it must identify the specific geographic area being requested (county or other clearly defined boundary). The area must encompass a minimum of 500 seed production acres. If interested in forming a GOZ, read through the *Procedures for Forming a Grower Opportunity Zone* found on the NAFA website and call the NAFA office prior to beginning.