



NAFA - Year in Review

National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance 2016-2017 Annual Report

First Ever Alfalfa Checkoff Kicks Off & Receives 34 Proposals

In January, the National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) kicked off the first ever alfalfa checkoff – U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative, a farmer-funded investment in alfalfa-related research to help drive innovation and profitability in the alfalfa industry. NAFA asked farmers and industry representatives to help identify research priorities through an online survey. Results were utilized for the first call for proposals announced in spring of 2017.

The checkoff, implemented voluntarily by seed brand, is assessed at the rate of \$1/bag of alfalfa seed. This is the first farmer-funded checkoff program the alfalfa industry has ever created – 100% of the funds are used to support public research into alfalfa and alfalfa forage systems. NAFA strongly encourages alfalfa farmers to patronize facilitating alfalfa seed marketers to support the checkoff.

NAFA received an impressive 34 proposals requesting more than \$1.4 million, demonstrating the high demand for funding. Proposals covered a wide range of topics intended to drive innovation and profitability in the alfalfa industry. A NAFA board-appointed panel reviewed proposals based on: methodology and analytical approaches, industry need, cost effectiveness/budget/matching funds, partnerships, and outreach.



Facilitating Marketers:

Alforex Seeds
America's Alfalfa
Channel
CROPLAN
DEKALB
Dyna-Gro
Fontanelle Hybrids
Forage First
FS Brand Alfalfa
Gold Country Seed
Hubner Seed
Jung Seed Genetics
Kruger Seeds
Latham Hi-Tech Seeds
Legacy Seeds
Lewis Hybrids
NEXGROW
Prairie Creek Seed
ProHarvest Seeds
Rea Hybrids
S&W Seed Company
Simplot Grower Solutions
Specialty
Stewart
Stone Seed
W-L Alfalfas

Research Funding, Safety Net – High Priorities for DC Fly-In

NAFA held its 7th Annual DC Fly-In, February 6-9, 2017. With the new farm bill in discussion, NAFA members made lawmakers aware that alfalfa is the nation's 3rd most valuable field crop and key to sustainable agricultural systems. Being recognized in policy and research funding decisions is critical to keeping pace with other cropping choices.

A top concern was the lack of an adequate alfalfa safety net. Since alfalfa is not a Title I program crop, farmers do not have access to Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage options made available in the previous farm bill for program crops. Planting of alfalfa is intrinsically discouraged in favor of program crops which have greater risk protection, especially when operating loans are involved. The need for a legitimate safety net, on par with other cropping choices, is critical. In addition to meeting with congressional offices on the safety net issue, NAFA also met with the Risk Management Agency on continued efforts to develop a quality and/or revenue program, and enhance and expand the forage seeding program coverage.

Research funding for alfalfa was also stressed during the Fly-In, as enhanced funding for the Alfalfa Seed and Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program (AFRP) and an additional \$10 million investment in alfalfa research at USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) were the focus. The AFRP, awarded \$1.35 million in fiscal years '14 and '15, \$2 million in '16, and \$2.25 million in '17, has provided critical research funding to researchers in 27 states, addressing critical alfalfa research needs. NAFA made the case for increasing AFRP to \$5 million for 2018. While AFRP funding does not level the playing field in terms of research funding between alfalfa and program crops, it is a significant step forward in bringing parity to public research funding. NAFA representatives also stressed the need for an increased investment of \$10 million in alfalfa research at USDA-ARS to better balance the ARS research portfolio.

NAFA focused its meetings on members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees and the Agriculture Appropriations Committees. In addition, NAFA met with: EPA to maintain communication about crop protection tools, USDA's Risk Management Agency to expand and improve its alfalfa crop insurance programs, and USDA-ARS to discuss the need to increase its financial commitment to alfalfa research.

Walla Walla Welcomes NAFA Board Members for Summer Meeting

NAFA's annual summer board meeting was held in Walla Walla, WA, on June 27-28. The Board met to discuss industry issues as well as tour local alfalfa seed and hay production farms. Walla Walla-based Nelson Irrigation, a NAFA sponsor and manufacturer of irrigation and sprinkler products for agricultural and industrial applications, provided an impressive guided tour. Mark Wagoner, NAFA board member representing the Washington Alfalfa Seed Commission, led NAFA representatives on a farm tour featuring alfalfa seed production fields and alkali bee beds. Drex Gaunt, NAFA board member representing the Washington State Hay Growers Association, followed with a tour of his alfalfa hay production farm. Thanks to meeting sponsors: *5B Farms, Baker Boyer, Crop Production Services, Monsanto, Nelson Irrigation, Nikonetz Farms, Northstar Seed, Papé Machinery, Ricard Farms, The McGregor Company, Touchet Seed & Energy, WA Alfalfa Seed Commission, Watts Leafcutter Bees Corp., and Wrigley Farms.*



NAFA Directors Darrin Unruh (left) and Ray Smith.

NAFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Drex Gauntt - Class 3
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Doug Rushing - Class 5
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MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the ability of all segments of the alfalfa and forage industry to compete effectively while maintaining access to global markets and meeting the requirements of those markets. The objective of NAFA is to be a forum for consensus building among the various stakeholders and to be an effective advocate on behalf of the alfalfa and forage industry.

EDUCATION

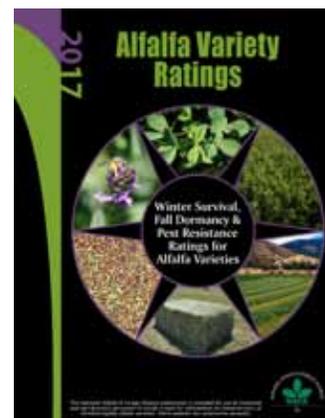
NAFA's 2017 Alfalfa Variety Ratings

The National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) released the 2017 edition of its popular "Alfalfa Variety Ratings – Winter Survival, Fall Dormancy & Pest Resistant Ratings for Alfalfa Varieties." The variety leaflet is a useful tool for farmers, extension specialists, agri-business personnel or anyone involved in the production of alfalfa.

NAFA's Alfalfa Variety Ratings is a publication unlike any other in providing an extensive listing of alfalfa varieties and their corresponding ratings for fall dormancy, winter survival, bacterial wilt, aphanomyces, leafhopper, and a host of other pests. The publication also includes other ratings such as grazing tolerance and standability, to provide information needed to make educated decisions about alfalfa varieties for given environments. All varieties listed could be purchased in the United States for the 2017 production year.

The 2017 edition featured 173 alfalfa varieties from 21 marketers and was verified with the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) and the National Alfalfa Variety Review Board (NAVRB).

An online version is available in addition to a searchable database (alfalfa.org/varietyratings.php) allowing users to search for varieties using up to 23 different parameters including variety name, marketer, fall dormancy, winter survival, disease resistance, insect resistance, etc. The publication was available in the November issue of *Hay & Forage Grower* magazine or by visiting NAFA's website at alfalfa.org.



NAFA's 2016 Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar (AITS) – Boise, ID

One of the most successful programs available for training industry professionals about alfalfa growth and management was held in Boise, ID, November 15-17, 2016. Sponsored by NAFA, the Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar (AITS) featured the latest information with regard to genetics, varieties, seed production, growth and development, soils, fertility, irrigation and water use, harvest management, forage quality and sampling, and a host of other topics. AITS provides participants the knowledge they need to make the most of their alfalfa investment. The 2016 seminar featured nationally recognized speakers: Dr. Kim Cassida, Michigan State University; Dr. Marvin Hall, Penn State University; Dr. Neal Martin, former director of the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center, Madison, Wisconsin; Dr. Glenn Shewmaker, University of Idaho; and Dr. Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin.

POLICY INITIATIVES

CROP PROTECTION TOOLS

EPA

NAFA continues to foster its relationship with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials. NAFA, in an effort to monitor EPA registrations, established two internal committees, hay and seed, to provide input on the re-registration and phase-out activities at EPA. Seed and forage farmers are encouraged to contact NAFA with a list of crop protection tools important to their operations; NAFA will add those tools to its list of products to be monitored and supported.

NAFA Representatives Meet with EPA to Discuss Bees, Crop Protection Tools

NAFA's DC Fly-In gave alfalfa seed farmers the opportunity to visit with representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about bee safety and crop protection tools which are essential to the industry. Alfalfa seed farmers rely heavily on alkali and leafcutter bees to pollinate their alfalfa seed crop and go to great lengths to protect them. While crop protection tools are essential to alfalfa seed production, bee safety is a top priority for alfalfa seed farmers. NAFA shared a recent video segment featuring Mark and Tim Wagoner, alfalfa seed farmers in Walla Walla Valley in Washington.

The meeting gave NAFA's alfalfa seed grower representatives the opportunity to demonstrate to EPA the great lengths to which they go to ensure the safety of their bees, as well as to talk about the crop protection tools that will be most effective against pests while maintaining bee safety. Alfalfa seed growers have worked for years to develop integrated pest management plans and other tools to protect bees and used this opportunity with EPA to discuss those activities. For many years, the partnerships among EPA, NAFA, State Departments of Agriculture, and alfalfa seed farmers have allowed for the growth and prosperity of the alfalfa seed industry, while at the same time have protected essential and sensitive bees critical to the successful production of alfalfa seed.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

NAFA Fosters Coexistence by Adding to List of Grower Opportunity Zones

NAFA continues to foster industry coexistence among producers of genetically enhanced, conventional, and organic alfalfa seed production by facilitating the formation of grower opportunity zones (GOZs), seed grower-defined geographies within which growers elect to focus on the production of either Adventitious Presence Sensitive (APS) or Genetically Enhanced (GE) alfalfa seed.

During the 2016-'17 fiscal year, NAFA continued to add to its list of approved GOZs. NAFA received and approved a request by alfalfa seed growers to designate Fremont and parts of Natrona County in Wyoming as a GE GOZ.

NAFA also approved a request to expand a GE GOZ from alfalfa seed growers in Carbon County, MT, and parts of Park and Big Horn Counties in Wyoming to include parts of Yellowstone County, MT.

A GOZ is a seed grower-defined geography within which a validated super-majority $\geq 80\%$ of alfalfa seed growers, or alfalfa seed growers representing $>80\%$ of the alfalfa seed production acres, elect to focus on the production of either APS or GE alfalfa seed, facilitating meeting isolation requirements for these markets.

Since the start of NAFA's GOZ program, NAFA has approved the formation of 27 GOZs, 21 GE GOZs and six APS GOZs. Visit NAFA's GOZ webpage for a complete list of GOZs and their corresponding maps.

AFRP Funding Increased to \$2.25 Million for FY 2017

NAFA's persistence continues to pay dividends in its efforts to secure enhanced research funding for the Alfalfa Seed and Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program (AFRP). The omnibus spending bill included an increase of \$250,000 over the previous year's AFRP award bringing the total FY 2017 appropriation to \$2.25 million to fund alfalfa-related research.

For years now, NAFA representatives have underscored to lawmakers the critical need for research funding for the alfalfa industry. NAFA's effort to procure research funding began with the 2008 Farm Bill in which it successfully secured language authorizing the AFRP under the bill's High Priority Research and Extension Areas. Working with Congressional offices, NAFA was able to maintain the AFRP language in the 2014 Farm Bill, providing continued authorizing language for the program.

In 2014, thanks to Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS), \$1.35 million in funding for the AFRP was included in the FY '14 budget reconciliation bill. Funding for the AFRP continued in FY '15 at \$1.35 million, and increased to \$2 million in FY '16. With 2017 funding at \$2.25 million, AFRP will focus on updated priorities:

- Increasing alfalfa forage and seed yields and forage quality through improved management practices, plant breeding, and other strategies to reduce biotic and abiotic stresses and costs of production.
- Improving alfalfa forage and seed harvest and storage systems to optimize economic returns to farmers as well as end-users, including milk producers.
- Developing methods to estimate alfalfa forage yield and quality to support marketing as a livestock feed and instruments to reduce farmer risks.
- Exploring new uses for alfalfa, such as in fish feeds, nutritive supplements, high-value chemical manufacturing, or other novel uses.

RESEARCH

Public research funding is a top priority for NAFA. NAFA has been successful in securing funding for the AFRP, the Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative (APRI), and creating the first ever alfalfa checkoff. To keep tabs on the progress of this public research, visit NAFA's research database to find comprehensive information regarding these research programs – AFRP, APRI, and checkoff – including project objectives, program priorities, and requests for applications. As projects reach completion, results and conclusions will be posted to the site as well.

Also available is a tool allowing users to search for projects based on keywords, researcher, university/entity, year of project, category, or research program. The site can be found at alfalfa.org/research.php.

NIFA Awards Funding to Eight AFRP Projects

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has awarded funding to eight projects in the AFRP. This round of funding marks the third year of the program created to support integrated, collaborative research and

Organization Research Education Policy Media Helpful Links NAAIC

Research Programs

The National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance was instrumental in securing funding for two research programs and implementing the first ever checkoff supporting the alfalfa industry.

- Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative (APRI)
- Alfalfa Seed & Forage Systems Research Program (ASAFS)
- Alfalfa Checkoff (USAFI)

The APRI, administered through USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), is devoted to ensuring the availability of healthy non-Apis mellifera populations essential for alfalfa seed production. APRI research focuses on pollinator management, production, safety, epidemiology and disease management, and genetics and demography.

The ASAFS, administered through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), supports integrated, collaborative research and technology transfer to improve the efficiency and sustainability of conventional and organic forage production systems. The program is devoted to improving alfalfa forage and seed yield, improving persistence, improving alfalfa forage and seed harvesting and storage systems, improving estimates of alfalfa forage quality, and breeding.

The Alfalfa Checkoff, also known as the U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative (USAFRI), is a farmer-funded investment in alfalfa-related research to help drive innovation and profitability in the alfalfa industry. Implemented voluntarily by seed brand, the Checkoff is assessed at the rate of \$1/bag of alfalfa seed. One hundred percent of the checkoff funds are used to support public research into alfalfa and alfalfa forage systems.

Find information by entering one or more of the drop-down search options:

Keyword:

Researcher:

University/Entity:

Year:

Categories:

Research Program:

[Home](#) | [Project Objectives](#) | [Program Priorities](#) | [FAQ](#)

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Forage Genetics International
Monsanto
S&W Seed Co.

PLATINUM

America's Alfalfa
CA Alfalfa Seed Prod. Research Board
CROPLAN by WinField United
DEKALB
Hay & Forage Grower
NEXGROW
WA Alfalfa Seed Commission
W-L Alfalfas

GOLD

DuPont Pioneer
ID Alfalfa & Clover Seed Commission
John Deere
Summit Seed Coatings
Western AG Enterprises
WY Alfalfa Seed Council

SILVER

CA Alfalfa & Forage Association
ID Hay & Forage Association
J.R. Simplot
KS Forage & Grassland Council
MacDon Industries Ltd.
Midwest Forage Association
MT Alfalfa Seed Committee
NE Alfalfa Marketing Association
Nelson Irrigation Corporation
NV Alfalfa Seed Commission
UT Farm Bureau Hay Committee
WA State Hay Growers Association

ASSOCIATE

American Seed Trade Association
Anderson Hay & Grain Co.
FMC
Harvest Tec
HayDay Farms, Inc.
K-F Seeds
MI Forage Council
Monsanto BioAg
NM Hay Association
Noble Research Institute
OR Hay & Forage Association
San Joaquin Valley Hay Growers Association
Valley Irrigation

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technology transfer to improve the efficiency and sustainability of alfalfa forage and seed production systems. It encourages projects establishing multi-disciplinary networks to address priority national or regional science needs of the alfalfa industry.

AFRP funds are collaborative in nature, meaning each project submission must include a collaboration among organizations in at least three states as a requirement of funding. Researchers from 14 states will share in this funding. AFRP supports the development of improved alfalfa forage and seed production systems. FY '16 priorities:

- Alfalfa forage and seed yield through better nutrient, water, and/or pest management;
- Persistence of alfalfa stands by lessening biotic or abiotic stresses;
- Alfalfa forage and seed harvesting and storage systems to optimize economic returns;
- Estimates of alfalfa forage quality as an animal feed to increase forage usage;
- Breeding to address biotic and abiotic stresses impacting forage yield and persistence and the production of seed for propagation.

FY 2016 AFRP Awards			
AFRP Project Title	Principal Investigator	Collaborators	Award
Overhauling Alfalfa Weevil Management in Irrigated Southwest Desert Alfalfa	Ayman Mostafa, Univ. of Arizona	Univ. of CA; UT State	\$246,000
LIDAR and Photogrammetry to Map Alfalfa Yield and Quality Using Unmanned Aircraft Systems	Joseph Dvorak, Univ. of Kentucky	PA State; Univ. of GA	\$250,000
Impact of Potassium Fertilization, Harvest Frequency, and Grazing Management in Alfalfa Persistence Across the Southeastern U.S.	Rocky Lemus, Mississippi State Univ.	LA State; Univ. of GA	\$249,134
Managing Selfing Rates in Alfalfa Seed Production Fields	Johanne Brunet, USDA-ARS (WI)	CA State; Univ. of CA; WA State	\$250,000
Increasing Preventative and Curative Options for Clover Root Curculio Management in Western Alfalfa	Ricardo Ramirez, Utah State Univ.	UC-Davis; Univ. of ID	\$250,000
Integrated Pest and Pollinator Management on Alfalfa Production as a Seed Crop	Doug Walsh, Washington State Univ.	UC-Davis; Univ. of ID	\$240,000
The Silent Decline in Soil Potassium Levels and Its Effect on Alfalfa Productivity in the Central and Western U.S.	Anowar Islam, Univ. of Wyoming	CO State; KS State	\$250,000
Subsurface Drip Irrigation, Deficit Irrigation Strategies, and Improved Varieties to Improve Alfalfa Water Use Efficiency Under Drought Conditions	Dan Putnam, Univ. of California	Univ of AZ; NM State	\$118,500

Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative Funding Distributed to Four Projects

The APRI awarded \$55,771 in funding to four research projects focused on supporting the health of non-Apis alfalfa pollinators. APRI, a coordinated research effort managed by the Pollinating Insects Research Unit in Logan, UT, focuses on: management for crop pollination; population sustainability; environmental safety; epidemiology and disease management; and genetics. The program is managed by Theresa Pitts-Singer of USDA's ARS (located at the Logan Bee Lab in Logan, UT).

Bees play a vital role in alfalfa seed production. Funding for the APRI provides valuable resources necessary to ensure the availability of healthy non-Apis pollinator populations essential for alfalfa seed production.

FY 2017 APRI Awards		
APRI Project Title	Principal Investigator	Award
Microbes & Alfalfa Leafcutting Bee Health	Quinn McFrederick, University of California-Riverside	\$16,948
Use of Traps to Control Hymenopteran Pests of Megachile rotundata During Storage & Incubation	Theresa Pitts-Singer, USDA-ARS	\$14,552
Revisiting Bomber Fly Control & Exploring Provision-Soil Moisture Relations	James Cane, USDA-ARS PIRU, Logan, UT	\$5,400
Enhancing and Protecting Populations of Alfalfa Seed Pollinators	Doug Walsh, Washington State University	\$18,871

FARMER & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Hay & Forage Grower Magazine

NAFA continues its agreement with *Hay & Forage Grower* magazine as its official publication. *Hay & Forage Grower* maintains the exclusive right to publish NAFA's annual "Alfalfa Variety Ratings – Winter Survival, Fall Dormancy & Pest Resistance Ratings for Alfalfa Varieties." *Hay & Forage Grower* also highlights news and information regarding NAFA activities.



NAFA President Presents at AZ Alfalfa & Forage Crops Workshop

NAFA President Beth Nelson joined farmers, industry professionals, and academia at the 3rd annual Arizona Alfalfa & Forage Crops Workshop to give a brief update of NAFA activities. The event, held on Wednesday, March 29, at the Maricopa Agricultural Center in Maricopa, AZ, featured some of the leading researchers in the alfalfa industry. Presentations covered a wide range of topics, including Key Agronomic Effects on Forage Quality, Subsurface Drip Irrigation in Alfalfa, Salinity Management in Alfalfa, etc.