

NATIONAL ALFALFA & FORAGE ALLIANCE

2021 Alfalfa Checkoff Request for Proposals – Round 1

National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) announces the U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative (**USAFRI**) request for proposals. USAFRI checkoff funds will be used to support public research into alfalfa and alfalfa forage systems. USAFRI is a farmer-funded investment in alfalfa-related research to help drive innovation and profitability in the alfalfa industry.

There is no commitment by NAFA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

1. Deadline/Where to Send.

Proposals **must be received** by NAFA office no later than **June 15, 2021**. Send electronic proposals to: nafa@alfalfa.org.

2. Eligibility.

All University, Extension, ARS, and non-profit (e.g., Noble Research Institute) researchers are eligible to apply for USAFRI funding.

Variety trials are not a priority of this RFP. However, proposals making direct comparisons between alfalfa varieties/products must include applicable: 1) multiple year, field/plot, and geographic locations; 2) 3+ commercially available varieties (w/identical dormancies) or products. Additionally, if the study focus is on varieties, they must have similar harvest/cutting windows; if the study focus is on quality, it must have identical sampling measurements.

3. Project Funding.

Project funding requests are capped at **\$100,000 for up to 2-year projects** (*smaller projects are encouraged*). Funds will be disbursed for allowable expenses following the submission of itemized invoices. A minimum of 10% of contract funding must be included on the final invoice which will be paid following the submission and acceptance of a final report.

All expenses shown to be directly required by project-specific activities will be considered eligible for funding. These can include salaries/fringe for technicians, graduate students, summer help, etc. (not principal investigators); materials and supplies; and travel (monitored closely). Purchase of new equipment is generally not an allowable expense, but may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Please include a summary of in-kind contributions and other matching funds associated with the research project. **Note: USAFRI funds shall not be used for indirect costs or tuition reimbursement. Preference given to projects which include support letters from industry.**

4. Proposal Content.

Proposals should not exceed 5 single-side pages (not including vitae) and must include:

- A. Justification (*need for project and potential impact*)
- B. Objectives
- C. Methodology
- D. USAFRI Research Priority(ies) addressed
- E. Timeline (*including start and end dates*)
- F. Budget/budget justification
- G. Contact information for PI and co-PIs
- H. Key personnel vitae (not included in page limit)

5. Project Duration and Final Report.

Proposals must include expected start and end dates. NAFA will consider both one-year and two-year projects. Requests for continued funding of multi-year projects will be considered as new submissions (a progress report for the previous project must be included). **A final project report must be submitted to NAFA by the end of the project period** (*this must include: a two-page summary with a photo and/or chart/graph - NAFA will do graphic layout; and a detailed report with no page limit; data should be expressed with appropriate statistical treatment*).

6. Proposal Review Process.

Proposals will be reviewed and selected by the NAFA board of directors or their designees. Criteria for determining which projects will be funded include, but are not limited to:

➤ Industry Need

- Alignment with **USAFRI Research Priorities** (*which are*):
 - Feed Value Consistency (i.e., harvest, storage, digestibility, sampling)
 - Forage Quality Improvements
 - New Uses and Market Development
 - Yield Improvements
- Ability to transfer research findings or technology for use on livestock or forage operations;
- Scientific merit, implementation feasibility, and methodology for objectively measuring results;
- Ability to accomplish project goals.

➤ **Cost Effectiveness**

- Direct or indirect savings and/or benefit to farmers;
- Ability of research outcomes to impact farm profitability;
- Feasibility of proposed budget and timeline.

➤ **Partnerships**

- Multi-environment and/or geographic representation;
- Collaboration with NAFA-affiliated associations encouraged.

7. Matching Opportunities

Due to limited USAFRI funds, we encourage applicants to seek match funding from additional sources.

Funded researchers are required to present findings at a NAFA meeting(s) without additional compensation. Researchers are expected to disseminate their findings as widely as possible to relevant audiences (i.e., conferences, meetings, newsletters); **NAFA and USAFRI must be credited in all reports and presentations.**

Please share this RFP with any other alfalfa researchers or forage extension agronomists who may be interested in submitting proposals. If you have questions, please contact the NAFA office at (651) 484-3888 or nafa@alfalfa.org.