



The 'Rodney Dangerfield' of Crops Finally Receives Respect

by Beth Nelson, NAFA President

Success! \$1.35 Million in Research Funding & Alfalfa Safety Net Development

NAFA has been relentless in educating lawmakers on the importance of the alfalfa/forage industry in terms of its economic value, and quality livestock feed and environmental attributes. But, alfalfa must offer a competitive value for farmers in order to provide these benefits and maintain or expand its acreage base. Alfalfa is the only major crop in the U.S. that does not have program crop status. Thus, being recognized in policy and research funding decisions is critical in keeping pace with other cropping choices.

Thanks to the dedicated leadership of Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) and other appropriators, alfalfa/forage producers can look forward to addressing critical research needs. In the FY '14 budget reconciliation bill, passed in January, \$1.35 million in funding was awarded for the Alfalfa Forage Research Program (AFRP).

Additionally, Senator Moran took a leadership role in addressing the lack of an adequate safety net for alfalfa producers in Farm Bill discussions. As a direct result, the Risk Management Agency (RMA) is pursuing research into the feasibility of insuring quality and revenue for alfalfa.

Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) also recognized the importance of alfalfa by inserting language in the Manager's Report of the Farm Bill. *"The Managers recognize alfalfa to be an important domestic forage crop valued for nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, crop rotation, and as a natural habitat. The Managers view alfalfa as having great potential for the national cash hay market and as an affordable means of supporting the forage and intensive grazing needs of the horse, cattle, and dairy sectors. However, from 2002 through 2011, alfalfa acreage has declined 15.7 percent, and in 2012 alone acreage declined an additional 10 percent. The Managers stress the importance of an alfalfa crop insurance policy to ensure that producers have the risk management protection that they need to produce this important crop. The Managers urge the Secretary to include information regarding regional differences in cultivation in the alfalfa crop insurance study."*

As President of NAFA, I believe we are beginning to gain recognition for our crop and the importance it plays in the agricultural landscape. We're very grateful to Senator Moran and his staff for understanding the importance of a safety net and the critical role research plays in keeping pace with other cropping choices. In recognition of his commitment to the alfalfa industry, NAFA presented Senator Moran with our first ever, outstanding service award!



Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) receives NAFA's inaugural Outstanding Service Award

Photos from the 4th Annual D.C. Fly-In - February 11-13, 2014

NAFA representatives attended more than 100 meetings to promote NAFA objectives, educate Congressional members and agency officials on the issues important to the alfalfa/forage industry, and continue to build awareness and recognition for one of the nation's most valuable crops.



NAFA Director Bill Talley; KY producer Clayton Gerald; Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY); NAFA Director Ray Smith



Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA); NAFA Director Mark Wagoner



NAFA Director Jeremy Larson; Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-KS); KS producer Stacy Krebbiel



WY producer John Grover; Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY)