



Alfalfa Checkoff Program

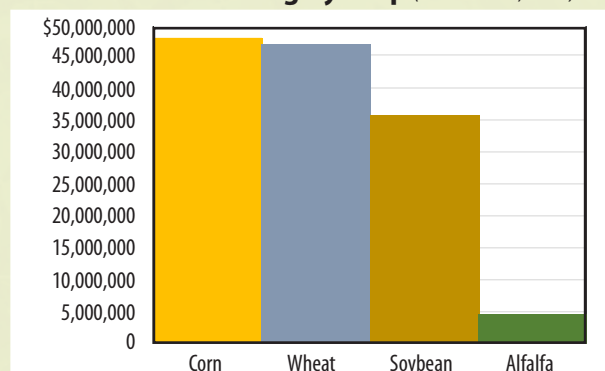
Dedicated to Public Research

Alfalfa is key to sustainable agricultural systems and is an economic engine in rural communities – its value for soil conservation, nitrogen fixation, energy savings, crop rotation, and wildlife habitat is unsurpassed. In terms of value, it is the nation's third most valuable field crop following only corn and soybean.

However, alfalfa must offer a competitive value for farmers in order to provide these benefits and maintain or expand acreage base. Yields of other major cropping choices have significantly surpassed alfalfa due, in part, to the vast amount of public research dedicated to these other crops.

While advances are being made in federal funds dedicated to public research (i.e., Alfalfa Seed & Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program - AFRP, Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative - APRI), USDA's public research portfolio needs to be better balanced to provide needed research to the nation's third most valuable field crop (see chart). In addition to enhanced USDA commitment, it is imperative U.S. alfalfa farmers also make a financial commitment to public research supporting the industry.

ARS Research Funding by Crop (Source: ARS; 2014)



How will the checkoff program work?

The checkoff will be voluntary by alfalfa seed brand. Each brand will identify their willingness to participate in the checkoff program. **The role of participating brands is simply to facilitate the collection of the checkoff from farmers purchasing their alfalfa seed** (similar to elevators facilitating the collection of other commodity checkoff programs). The money collected comes from the farmer, not the seed marketer.

Checkoff Rate: \$1/bag on all U.S. sales of alfalfa seed including VNS and forage mixtures containing greater than 80% alfalfa.
Invoicing: It will be added to the alfalfa seed purchase invoice in a method identified by each participating brand (i.e., separate invoice line item; adding \$1 to price of each bag).

Publicity/Recognition: Seed marketers are encouraged to include the checkoff logo in digital/print media, bag tags, and/or bag imprints. To support the U.S. Alfalfa Research Initiative, farmers are encouraged to purchase seed from participating brands.

Participating Brands: If your favorite brand is not on the list, contact NAFA for information on how a seed marketer can become a participating brand.

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

How will checkoff funds be spent?

The funds will be spent on public research into alfalfa and alfalfa forage systems (100% of funds will support public research; NAFA will not assess administrative costs). The checkoff will support research into the improvement of yields, water conservation, development of new storage and harvest systems, creation of new uses, and other research areas holding the potential to advance the alfalfa and alfalfa forage industry through integrated, collaborative research and technology transfer.

How will funds be distributed & outreach be conducted?

Research Priorities: NAFA, with input from farmer and industry members, will develop a list of research priorities.

Requests for Proposals: An RFP will be circulated to all known public U.S. alfalfa researchers.

Review Panel & Awards: NAFA will identify a subcommittee made up of university researchers, industry representatives, and farmers to evaluate proposals on scientific merit, conceptual adequacy, innovation, institutional qualifications, and relevance to industry priorities.

Outreach: Researchers will be required to submit a final project report that will be archived in a searchable database on the NAFA website. Additionally, researchers may be requested to present their findings at forage meetings and provide summaries that can be published in industry magazines.



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