

Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar: A Decade of Achievement

Garry D. Lacefield¹, Rod Christensen², Marvin Hall³, Neal Martin⁴,
Glenn Shewmaker⁵, and Dan Undersander⁶

¹Extension Forage Specialist, University of Kentucky

²Executive Director, National Alfalfa Alliance

³Extension Forage Specialist, Pennsylvania State University

⁴Director, Dairy Forage Research Center

⁵Extension Forage Specialist, University of Idaho

⁶Extension Forage Specialist, University of Wisconsin

In the early 1990's, Dr. Garry Lacefield taught a graduate level short-course on alfalfa production primarily for County Extension Agents at the University of Kentucky. Following the success of the short course a proposal was developed and presented to the Certified Alfalfa Seed Council to develop a National Alfalfa Seminar. Mr. John Lyons, President of the Certified Alfalfa Seed Council appointed a committee in spring 1992 consisting of Dr. Garry Lacefield, Chairman, Dr. Don Ball, Dr. Marvin Hall, Dr. Clive Holland, Dr. Neal Martin, and Dr. Dan Undersander and charged the committee with the responsibility of organizing and implementing the seminar. Following a year of planning, the first seminar was conducted in March, 1993 in Louisville, Kentucky. The seminar was a three day training session that covered alfalfa from "Seed to Feed and Beyond". Cost for the seminar was set at \$500.00 and covered all seminar materials including a comprehensive notebook, refreshments and meals.

Students in the National Alfalfa Training Seminar have come from thirty-nine different states and nine countries. Over 65 percent have come from the seed industry. Other segments of the alfalfa industry with consistent participation have come from the chemical and equipment industry. Public sector participants have included county agricultural agents, NRCS, hay testing personnel and government agency representatives. Many progressive alfalfa and/or livestock producers have participated.

At the request of graduates from the Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar a "Session II" was initiated in 1998 and has been offered annually since. Session II is offered only to graduates of the regular session and is held at the same time and location as the regular session and taught by the same faculty.

The Alfalfa Training Seminar is an excellent example of a National level "Team" approach to delivering practical-applied alfalfa information. This three-day intensive training has filled a void in vital alfalfa training. Specialists from over fifteen different Universities have combined efforts with Industry, and National Alfalfa Council Alliance personnel to present this seminar to over 900 individuals. Overall ratings from participants have been excellent and the seminar has been financially self-sufficient since its inauguration.

We invite you to join us for our next Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar to be held at the Wyndham Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico, November 16-18, 2004. For more information visit us on the web at: www.alfalfa.org.