



June 9, 2022

National Alfalfa and Forage Alliance
4630 Churchill Street, #1
St. Paul, MN 55126

Re: Support Cameron Pittelkow and Dan Putnam

Dear National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance,

The California Alfalfa & Forage Association (CAFA) is eager to support the proposal from Cameron Pittelkow and Dan Putnam at UC Davis with the goal of quantifying the carbon footprint of high-yielding irrigated alfalfa production systems in California.

In California, alfalfa is grown in rotation with many other crops and is a key part of the agricultural landscape. Our industry has long recognized the environmental benefits of perennial forages including reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved soil quality and carbon storage, enhanced wildlife habitat, and a reduction in nitrogen leaching. However, few studies have documented the ecosystem services provided by alfalfa, and from an economic perspective, they are not currently valued in the marketplace. Due to high costs of production and increasingly limited water supplies in California and much of the Western U.S., the financial viability of alfalfa is under threat.

In the private sector, there is exciting momentum in providing economic incentives to farmers to reduce GHG emissions while increasing soil carbon storage. We are eager to support this project because quantifying the carbon footprint of alfalfa production for different growing regions in California is an important step in this direction, potentially generating additional revenue for growers. Scientific studies on this topic are limited, so we see great value in documenting the benefits of alfalfa using the lifecycle analysis methodology. This could eventually provide the foundation for ecosystem service payments to sequester carbon and avoid GHG emissions, which is an important goal of the U.S. dairy sector.

CAFA strongly urges you to consider funding this important project.

Sincerely,

Nicole Helms
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