

## Beautifully Blended or All Mixed Up? Getting the most out of your alfalfa

I have talked for years about the benefits in yield from mixing alfalfas. Like me, many dealers talk excitedly about their special blends of alfalfas. Some newer dealers, however, may not know how to achieve the most diversity, and all this talk may have them all mixed up. Perhaps you are like Dennis Brown, who asks, “Why don’t you mix all of them together and sell one alfalfa?” (Well, Dennis, that sure would make a super alfalfa! And it would sure help cut down on line items in the warehouse!)

Dr. Dan Undersander, with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, told me years ago to use varieties from different breeding programs when blending alfalfa. Why? Greater diversity will bring greater strengths to the hay stand.

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Because we work with so many alfalfa breeders here at Byron, we have a great opportunity to achieve greater strengths through greater diversity. But because breeders may share genetics, the wiser route would seem to be to use a blend of different *types* of alfalfas. (Remember, however, that *any blending* of premium alfalfa will raise the performance bar.)

By mixing alfalfas from two or more of the groups shown below, you’ll take advantage of the greatest amount of alfalfa diversity and will increase the performance of your stand. Give me a call if you need help in making your selection!

### Alfalfa Groups: Beautiful Blending Drives Yields

**Group #1: Traditional Alfalfas**—These alfalfas have deep, singular tap roots and do what alfalfa is known for. Because of the sheer number of traditional alfalfas, they probably have the most diversity, and it would not be wrong to blend two from this group. Adding an alfalfa from another group will sweeten the pot!

**Examples:** KF4020, KF425HD, KF426HD, KF406A2, KF101 and all organic alfalfas

**Group #2: Traditional Root + Hybrid Alfalfas**—These traditional-root alfalfas have unique genetics and blend well with other alfalfas.

**Examples:** KF402H, KF601H

**Group #3: Branch-Root Alfalfas**—This group of alfalfas is tolerant to higher-clay areas and higher-moisture soils.

**Examples:** KF444, KF401B, KF406A2, KF409A2, KF222

**Group #4: Standfast Alfalfas**—In a mix, this group of alfalfas adds a European alfalfa influence.

**Example:** KF243

**Group #5: Redheaded Step Alfalfas**—Adding an alfalfa in this group will add spice to the soup!

**Examples:** KF403CR, KingFisher red clover

Alfalfa Mixology by Ernest Weaver