Testimony to North Dakota Senate Appropriations Committee
North Dakota State University
North Central Research Extension Center, Minot, ND
January 2021

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee and discuss a few of the significant accomplishments of the North Central Research Extension Center (NCREC) that directly impact North Dakota agriculture. For the record, I am Shana Forster, director of the NDSU North Central Research Extension Center (NCREC) located near Minot, ND. I have been a dedicated member of the team at the NCREC since 2008 and have held previous roles at the Center within both the ND Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) and NDSU Extension.

The NCREC's current focus areas include, but are not limited to, agronomy research, pulse crops breeding, Extension education, Foundation seed increase, weed science research, and winter hardy grapes. We strive to provide unbiased, scientific research in all areas. I will provide a few updates on the work that is ongoing.

The weed science research program at the NCREC has worked closely with the ND Department of Agriculture and other NDSU personnel to help correctly identify the invasive, noxious weed species Palmer amaranth. Additionally, narrowleaf hawksbeard, another invasive weed, is now a problem in NW ND. Research to control and eliminate this new weed is directed out of the NCREC.

Agronomy research trials are conducted by NCREC scientists in cooperation with surrounding crop improvement boards at off-site locations each year. Data from these trials enable producers to make decisions based on research conducted closer to their growing environment. David Teigen, a Rugby producer, will provide testimony on the importance of such research to his livelihood.

In the last few years, the NDSU AES has released new varieties of pulse crops, specifically lentil, chickpea and field pea. The NCREC works closely with the main campus plant breeder, to manage this work. The advantage of conducting much of the research at the NCREC is that most of the commercial pulse production in ND is in our region of the state. In addition, the NCREC has produced Foundation seed of these varieties, which we then distribute to regional seed growers.

The people of ND own the largest seed company in the United States. The mission of the NCREC Foundation Seed program is to provide the best, pure genetics to ND producers. I am happy to report that we have completed the NCREC seed conditioning facility and it is now operational. We will be able to condition all of our 2019 Foundation-grade seed in this state-of-the-art facility. Following an initial General Fund appropriation of 750K, the completion of this facility was a grass roots effort by local seed producers after many years of effort.

Proposed funding cuts to the NCREC will result a complete reevaluation of current programs. After adjusting to previous legislative cuts, we have not filled many vacated positions. Any additional cuts would result in changes to existing programs and further impact workload and morale. I ask that you please consider a hold even budget for the NDSU AES and Extension which is a critical need.

As always, I extend my thank you to this committee and the entire North Dakota Legislature for your support of the NCREC, NDAES, NDSU Extension, SBARE Initiatives, and NDSU.

Shana M. Forster, Director
NDSU North Central Research Extension Center
5400 Hwy 83 S (701) 857-7679
Minot, ND 58701 shana.forster@ndsu.edu