

Testimony on SB 2020
Karlee Rauschenberger, Farmer
NCREC Board of Visitors Member
Minot, North Dakota

Chairman Monson and members of the committee:

My name is Karlee Rauschenberger, I am a farmer from south of Minot. I am here to ask for your support for the North Dakota State University Agriculture Research Extension Centers, specifically the North Central Research Center in Minot.

I grew up on a 3rd generation family farm. My two brothers went on to farm out of college and I became a teacher. When the oil boom came to western North Dakota my family was having trouble finding help on the farm so my husband and I both started running equipment and working on the farm.

Two years ago my husband, Gabe, and I rented land from a family member and started our own fourth generation family farm. Since Gabe is also a school principal many of the decisions and day to day farm operations fell to me. Farming is very complex and learning to farm at age 42 was an especially daunting task.

This is when the NDSU Research Extension Centers became imperative to our farm's success. I began listening to the online ag market updates, attending in-person training events and reading online research and resources. What I love most about the research extension centers is that the people conducting the research are specialized, highly educated and their focus is on helping farmers and the agriculture industry in North Dakota succeed.

I can read research online regarding when to spread fertilizer, how to deal with specific weeds or how to market my crops. Then I can pick up the phone and call the person who conducted the research and receive valuable input on the best way to manage our farm operation.

This is so valuable to ag producers in the state regardless of age or years of farming experience. The ag industry is dynamic and ongoing research and learning is necessary for the success of agriculture in ND. The NDSU Research Extension Centers serve as lifelines for many family farming operations.

This year is my first year on the Board of Visitors at the North Central Research Extension Center. Serving on the board has allowed me to see first hand how much the center is doing to support and enhance agriculture in the state. A primary need for this center is an increase in operating funds. As costs on the farm are increasing, their costs are increasing as well and it is important to be able to both operate and maintain the research facility in Minot.

Funding for an Agronomy Research Specialist is also very important. Soil types, weed issues, weather and crops grown vary across the state. It is imperative to have local research to help growers make informed decisions that work for the area they are farming in.

Farming is complex, it is not easy. Farmers need solid research on what does and doesn't work in the field and they need support. The NDSU North Central Research Center provides the knowledge and support farmers in north central North Dakota need to succeed. Thank you so much for your time and what you are doing to ensure the success of family farms for future generations.