



North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association

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In Support of SB 2020 (Re: Toxicology Resident Position)

March 11, 2025

Dear Members of the House Appropriations – Government Operations Committee,

The North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association (NDVMA) represents over 300 veterinarians across our state, working tirelessly to ensure the health and well-being of animals and the integrity of North Dakota's agricultural industry. Today, we are reaching out to request your support in securing funding for a veterinary toxicology resident at the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL).

The NDSU VDL stands among an elite group—one of only eight veterinary laboratories in the United States with a board-certified veterinary toxicologist (Diplomate of the American Board of Veterinary Toxicology). These highly specialized professionals play a critical role in identifying and preventing toxicological diseases in livestock, companion animals, and wildlife. Their expertise is vital in safeguarding North Dakota's agriculture by educating veterinarians, producers, and the public about toxicologic hazards affecting cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry, and small animals.

The NDSU VDL is recognized for its excellence in large animal toxicology, successfully identifying toxins such as petroleum contaminants, ergot alkaloids, phytoestrogens, blister beetle toxins, and mycotoxins in feed and animals. The laboratory's veterinary toxicologist, Dr. Michelle Mostrom, provides the necessary interpretation and guidance to ensure appropriate treatment and preventative measures for toxicologic diseases. However, this critical expertise is at risk.

The field of veterinary toxicology faces a crisis. Most diagnostic veterinary toxicologists in the U.S. are nearing retirement, including Dr. Mostrom at the NDSU VDL. Alarming, there are only three veterinary toxicology residents currently training in diagnostic settings—located in California, Iowa, and Kansas. Without intervention, North Dakota could be left without a veterinary toxicologist within the next five years. Such a loss would significantly impact our state's ability to diagnose and manage toxicologic threats to our livestock and agricultural economy.

On behalf of NDVMA veterinarians, we urge you to consider this funding request as a strategic investment in North Dakota's agricultural resilience and economic stability. By securing the necessary resources now, we can preserve the vital role of veterinary toxicologists and protect our state's producers, veterinarians, and animals from toxicological risks.

We appreciate your time and consideration of this urgent matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out for further discussion or additional information. We look forward to your support in safeguarding the future of veterinary toxicology in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Beaudoin".

Laura Beaudoin, DVM

Past President (2021)

North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association