

Testimony to North Dakota House Appropriations Committee: SB 2020

March 11, 2025

North Dakota State University

NDSU Agriculture Experiment Station & Research Extension Centers

My name is Justin Topp. I am a 4th generation farmer from Grace City, North Dakota.

Today, I'm here on behalf of the countless farmers and ranchers who use and rely on the Carrington Research Extension Center. I want to talk about the value of the CREC and what it means to us as farmers and ranchers.

In 2015, NDSU projected the average cost of planting a corn crop at \$431.21. In 2025 for the East Central Region where my farm and the Carrington Research Extension Center are located, NDSU is projecting the same corn crop to cost \$552.34. That's an almost 30% increase to raise the same crop in 10 years. The same can be said for almost every crop across the board. The one thing that isn't accounted for in those budget numbers? Research and Development.

The CREC acts as the research and development arm for farmers and ranchers in central North Dakota and is the leading source of unbiased information on crop and livestock production for our area. The research center's areas of research include cover crop usage and grazing of cover crops, how crop rotation effects yield, fertilizer rate trials, chemical use trials, variety trials, organic trials, alternative feed source trials, and the list goes on and on. As individual farmers we can't even begin to scratch the surface of the breadth and depth of the research being done at the CREC! Thanks to the research and educational programs CREC provides, farmers and ranchers benefit from enhanced productivity. With increased productivity comes increased revenue for farmers and ranchers in our region and state. In turn returning more tax dollars back to our states and local communities!

The world of agriculture is ever changing and shifting. As farmers we are asked to produce more output with less inputs and do it more sustainably. Without the continued efforts of the Carrington Research Extension Center it would make the job of producing more with less, extremely difficult. Seed, chemical, and fertilizer companies spend millions of dollars each year researching and testing their products. But most of those products are tested in areas with different weather patterns and soil types than North Dakota, and are conducted by companies with a financial stake in the results. CREC is an unbiased source that tests these products in our geographical region.

As a farmer and business owner I understand the need to allocate funding. Where is the money best spent and where am I getting the largest return on investment. I am here today to say that I believe it is in continued and increased funding for the Carrington Research Extension Center and the other REC's across the state. I know as our costs for putting in a crop has increased so has the cost to run the Research Centers. The need for added staff for the ever increasing areas of research from Plant

Pathology to Precision Ag. The need for more equipment storage to store and maintain expensive research equipment.

I can tell you from my experience using the Carrington Research Extension Center and interacting with their Staff that any increased funding will not go to waste. The programs they host are extremely well presented and full of useful real-world information. The staff and scientists are always easy to get along with and eager to share research and visit about any problems we are facing in production Ag.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Justin Topp
T-T Ranch
Grace City, ND
701-307-0408
Justin.k.topp@gmail.com