

**Kevin Sedivec, Central Grasslands Research Extension Center  
House 2025 Testimony**

**Good Morning,**

**Chair Munson, members of the House Appropriations Government Operations Division**

**For the record, my name is Kevin Sedivec, Interim Director for the Central Grasslands Research Extension Center**

**Thanks for the opportunity to testify today**

**The center's goals are to:**

- 1) Develop grazing management strategies and identify best forage options that enhance livestock production, ecosystem services, healthy range and soils, and enhance the lives of North Dakota citizens

**I want to THANK the 67th and 68th Legislative Assembly for their continued support for the Central Grasslands REC. Specifically, thanks for funding our**

- 1) Capital projects: We completed the new livestock research facility early this year and the director's residency will be completed by June
- 2) Generous compensation and equity adjustment package, and continued support for deferred maintenance and equipment from the 68th Assembly

**The center's success and productivity is due to our partnership with main station scientists and Extension specialists, REC network, and collaboration with numerous government and private agencies, and livestock producers.**

**1) Our latest research assessing regenerative grazing using rotational grazing with varying grazing intensities showed:**

- a. Increased grazing efficiency by cattle of 37.6 percent (4-year average).
  - i. This increased efficiency added 21 pounds of beef per acre. At \$3 calves this equates to \$63 in added value per acre
- b. The USDA, NRCS showed an adoption rate for rotational grazing at 47 percent for the Northern Plains in 2023.
  - i. If only 10% of these ranchers adopted this grazing strategy, we would see an increased revenue by these ranchers of ~ \$59.4 million annually in North Dakota.

## **2) Precision agriculture using virtual fencing**

- a. Central Grasslands REC was the first to bring precision agriculture with virtual fencing to North Dakota in 2022
  - i. We are national leaders in testing this technology. We have collaborated with the NDSU School of Natural Resource Sciences and Animal Sciences, as well as the Carrington, Dickinson, and Hettinger REC, and two private ranches using 23 herds and almost 3,300 acres. We expect 20 to 25 producers to adopt this technology in 2025.
  - ii. This project is a classic model of testing new research – leading to Extension programming – which leads to delivery – then adoption.

## **3) Extension programming**

- a. Extension programming tied to Central Grasslands REC had over 4,300 direct contacts at 89 events in 2024, with an indirect reach of 1,319,105 people.
  - i. Our Extension Livestock specialist (Lisa Pederson) leads the state's Beef Quality Assurance program. This program certified over 300 producers and 15,000 head of cattle in 2024, adding over \$1.5 million in added value to those North Dakota producers.

## **4) Workforce Development**

- a. The center takes pride in developing our future workforce, with 32 PhD and MS graduate students finishing up since 2019, and we've
- b. Trained over 100 undergraduate students by providing summer technician positions

### **In terms of Needs for 2025-2027**

#### **1) We strongly support SBARE Priority Initiative #4 for the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station (NDAES) on increasing the operating budget, equipment and graduate research assistantships.**

- a. From 2020 to 2024, CGREC operating costs increase by 34% (+\$119,000/year or 12% of our budget).
- b. We also had budget cuts during the 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 sessions of 5 and 14.5%; respectively, creating a total loss of funds for research, development and Extension at 31% since 2015.

#### **2) And lastly, we support the NDAES Capital Improvement Request #3: A Storage Shed for equipment and precision technology**