

Testimony to North Dakota House Appropriations Committee
NDSU North Central Research Extension Center, Minot, ND
March 2021

Good afternoon, Chairman Monson and Members of the House Appropriations Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee and discuss a few of the significant accomplishments of the NDSU North Central Research Extension Center (NCREC) that directly impact North Dakota agriculture. For the record, I am Shana Forster, director of the NCREC located near Minot, ND.

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 information in all areas. I will provide a few updates about our work.

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 particular weed is directed out of the NCREC.

The main 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. Following the initial General Fund appropriation of \$750K, the completion of this facility was a grass roots effort by local producers.

The NDSU AES has recently 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.

Agronomy research trials are conducted by NCREC scientists, in cooperation with surrounding county 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 how research conducted in cooperation with RECs impact his livelihood.

Our applied research programs utilize specialized equipment for much of our field research activities. The current NCREC equipment fleet includes a no-till precision planter with the option to modify row spacing and seeding rate. The agronomy program is eagerly anticipating the delivery of a new plot combine this summer, which will be our 'newest' combine, a 2004 model. One AES Capital Improvement Request from SBARE is equipment storage facilities at RECs. I would ask that you please consider this request to protect our valuable equipment investments.

Another AES Capital Improvement Request from SBARE is the need for updated livestock research facilities at RECs, which is imperative to the expansion of the livestock industry in ND and the continued efforts of our livestock researchers. In addition to the livestock facilities, the need for Extension specialists to work with producers and Extension agents will aid in the delivery of research. An off-campus Extension livestock specialist located at the NCREC would be centrally located in the state and an ideal fit to our current research and Extension programs.

As always, I extend my thank you to this committee and the entire North Dakota Legislature for your support.

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