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**Testimony of  
Matt Perdue  
North Dakota Farmers Union  
Before the  
House Agriculture Committee  
March 10, 2023**

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Chairman Thomas and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2373. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's (NDFU) members.

NDFU supports SB 2373, which would establish a new "Livestock Friendly County (LFC)" program in North Dakota. The LFC designation provides a framework for local discussions to promote livestock development. The designation also signals to livestock producers that the county supports development, giving farmers and ranchers the confidence to make long-term decisions about investing in the future of their operations.

The LFC program is a voluntary, opt-in designation. A county is eligible for the designation only after the board of county commissioners has adopted and enacted a resolution expressing interest in developing, maintaining, or expanding livestock production and processing. The bill also requires counties who wish to pursue the designation to collaborate with other political subdivisions in the county. We believe collaboration among political subdivisions is critical to building healthier local conversations about livestock development.

The LFC program is modeled after an existing program in Nebraska. Currently, 51 counties in Nebraska carry the LFC designation.

SB 2373 is an important component within a broader suite of bills aimed at supporting locally led livestock development. Earlier this session, the House passed HB 1437, which establishes regional livestock planning grants. HB 1437 provides grants to conduct rural development site analyses and help townships update their zoning ordinances. The site analysis from HB 1437 is referenced as a requirement for the LFC designation in Section 1, Paragraph 2d.

HB 1437 gives the county foundational information about the potential for livestock development. This bill takes the next step. SB 2373 provides a framework for developing a comprehensive strategy to promote the livestock sector.

We respectfully request a "Do Pass" recommendation on SB 2373. Thank you for your consideration. I will stand for any questions.