

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, for the record my name is Wyatt Kersten, I am a North Dakota FFA State Officer serving as the 2022-2023 State Parliamentarian for the North Dakota FFA Association. I am here today on behalf of the North Dakota State Fair on House Bill 1009 to support the allocation of \$570,000.00 dollars in premium dollars for exhibitors at the North Dakota State Fair. I would appreciate your full support of \$570.000.00 in premium dollars in House Bill 1009.

I am here today to share my North Dakota State Fair livestock showing experience and how it has affected my life. I grew up on a small farm surrounded by a wide variety of animals. I was introduced to 4-H and showing livestock at a very young age. I started by showing a couple chickens and a goat. As I got older, my passion for showing livestock at the North Dakota State Fair grew and what started as a couple chickens being shown in 4-H, quickly grew to 32 chickens, 32 rabbits, and 3 goats exhibited in 4-H and FFA. I was a 4-H member of the Afton Country Kids in Ward county and a member of the Max FFA Chapter. I was a 4-H member for 14 years and I showed livestock for 11 years. I attended school in Max and I have been a member of the Max FFA for the past 6 years. Being a part of these two youth organizations and showing at the North Dakota State Fair, allowed me to grow into the person I am today.

If you would ask me why I spent so much time and money on my love to show livestock, premium money wouldn't be my number one answer, but it is still very important. I, like many other showmen, don't do what we do for just the money, it's more about the experience and the pride it takes to show an animal and care for it. I spend countless hours caring for each animal, spending my income on the vaccines to keep them healthy and investing in expensive feed to help the animal reach their full growth and development potential.

The premium dollars that showmen receive is a source of pride for all our hard work throughout the year because that check means that it was all worth it. The premium dollars help the showmen in multiple ways because most times what we spend on our animals is a lot higher than some may think. Let me explain, earlier I stated I showed 32 rabbits in 4-H and FFA. I have a herd size of roughly 200 rabbits to feed. My family and I buy two tons of feed every other month, one ton of feed costs us \$250.00 for one month of feed. In one year we spend about \$3,000.00 of feed on just the rabbits. The premium dollars help cover expenses, but are the reward and recognition for the hard work. To give you an idea of the premiums we receive, a blue ribbon for a rabbit in 2021 received \$7.50. Clearly, I'm not getting rich here!!!

Almost every showman will take this premium dollar check and put it directly back into their operation by either using it to buy more feed and supplies for their animals' needs or use the dollars to help make payments on loans. These premium dollars are crucial for showmen and the future of 4-H and FFA members showing their animals and showcasing North Dakota's number one industry, agriculture.

I would appreciate your full support of \$570.000.00 in premium dollars in House Bill 1009. Thank you for your time. Are there any questions?

