

January 13, 2023

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Bowman ND 58623-0564

Dear Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

I write to support HB 1020 and especially the funding priorities of the ND Agricultural Experiment Station regarding their proposal for Bee and Apiary Research with 2 FTEs at the Hettinger REC.

Frankly, it's long overdue that NDSU have a honey bee researcher. With North Dakota's leading role in honey production, a large portion of the nation's honey bees spend their summers here. Ensuring the health and vigor of these honey bees is a help to our economy as these many beekeepers operate here and drive economic activity.

In addition, we would begin to be doing our part in supporting the nation's pollinated agriculture. Almonds, apples, cherries, pears, berries, and vegetable seed crops all depend on pollination from hives, many of which spend their summers here. The farmers growing these crops depend on strong, healthy hives to boost, and in some cases, create, a good yield on their crops. The first honey bee researcher in the NDSU system is a good first step to do our part to support the nation's supply of vitamin-rich pollinated crops.

This proposal is for 2 FTEs, one a scientist and one an apiary technician. This is wise on the part of those who are planning this Bee and Apiary Research Program. A scientist alone can create experiments but an assisting technician can do the beekeeping required to maintain a significant base of hive upon which to conduct research. Not having a technician is a mistake many academic honey bee programs make. They conduct research in the lab but too often their results cannot be translated into relevant field-ready advice or techniques because it "doesn't scale up." A full time technician will maintain a large number of hives for research purposes and allow the scientist to devote their time to study and experiments without worrying about moving the bees out of the way of a pesticide application, or wondering if the bees are starving or are too full of honey. I heartily approve of both FTEs, especially the wisdom of the technician. The two will go hand in hand to create a valuable research program.

Please support HB 1020 and the proposed funding for the Hettinger Research Extension Center, Bee and Apiary Research Program.

Tim Hiatt
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