

**Testimony for the NDSU Hettinger Research Extension Center, Christopher Schauer, Director  
House Appropriations Hearing – HB1020  
January 16, 2023**

Thank you Chairman and members of the House Appropriations Committee. For the Record, my name is Christopher Schauer and I am the Director of the Hettinger Research Extension Center.

Thank you to the 67<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly for funds for the construction of an equipment storage shed. We were happy that during this competitive and highly volatile construction bidding market that we were able to finish the storage shed this past fall. It was approximately 20% smaller than we had anticipated, but we are grateful the space that it provides to keep our research and production equipment out of the weather. Additionally, I would like to thank you for the Special Session funding that was provided to construct a Smart Small Ruminant Feedlot and a Livestock Lab. These facilities will bring state-of-the-art feeding and livestock handling facilities to NDSU to put us on the leading edge of livestock research: research such as finding genetic markers in livestock for feed efficiency and quantifying the impacts of livestock on greenhouse gas emissions. Both projects have been placed out for bids and we anticipate at a minimum the feedlot complex will be finished by the winter of 2023. We are still sorting through the bids for the Livestock Lab. Your previous support for deferred maintenance has also allowed us to renovate a 1970's office into graduate student and intern housing, something that was desperately needed at the HREC to continue to attract students as housing in Hettinger is in limited supply.

The research at the HREC continues to focus on Agronomy, Weed Science, Wildlife and Range Science, and Animal Science. We started a new Livestock Internship program this past year in partnership with the University of Puerto Rico. This partnership has provided reliable labor while bringing new ideas and faces to Hettinger. Similar to all of the agricultural producers in ND, labor continues to be in short supply, and this new program offers some unique ways for us to fill that gap, while still employing plenty of local and regional high school and college interns and training graduate students from across the country.

The #1 request coming from the Hettinger REC Advisory Board, with support from the ND Beekeepers Association, is the funding of a Bee and Apiary Research Program. North Dakota is the number one producer of honey in the United States. As a state, the total number of bee colonies is 495,000 or 18% of all colonies in the United States. These colonies contribute to 26% of all honey produced nationally, which is valued at approximately \$67 million. Although North Dakota produces more honey than any other state, we have no research program supporting beekeepers. North Dakota honey producers need apiary research to address pressing issues such as colony collapse and improve honey production by developing greater winter hardiness, improved mite resistance, and increased hygiene. Additionally, research can improve interactions with other agricultural systems of the state while benefitting native pollinator populations and ecosystem services through improved land use. This request made it on to the SBARE Ag Experiment Station priority list, and was suggested for funding by the Governor. A summary of what that program would look like is included with this testimony. A final item that the HREC and Advisory Board are bringing to the legislature this year is a proposed land purchase of 610 acres. This is going to be handled through a separate bill starting in the Senate. We have been renting this parcel for the 16 years and it is integral to our research program. The family has indicated they will be selling the land, but have given NDSU an opportunity to purchase it if approved by the legislature. Further information will be included in the testimony for that separate bill, but I wanted this committee to be aware of the discussion.

In closing, we support all of the initiatives in the SBARE priority list, especially items that directly affect our staff, such as increased operating support, deferred maintenance, and raises to offset the cost of inflation.

Thank you for your past support and am looking forward to another productive biennium. I will entertain any questions.

Hettinger Research Extension Center

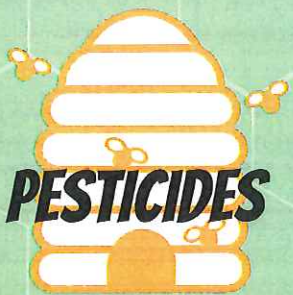
# Apiary Research & Extension Program



COLONY COLLAPSE  
HONEY PRODUCTION  
WINTER HARDINESS  
MITE RESISTANCE  
HYGIENE



CONTROL



INTERACTIONS WITH  
AGRICULTURE



RESOURCE ALLOCATION  
INTERACTIONS WITH  
NATIVE POLLINATORS



**RESPONSIVENESS**

**NDSU**

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