

Testimony to North Dakota House Appropriations Committee: HB 1020  
North Dakota State University  
North Central Research Extension Center, Minot, ND  
January 2023

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: Thank you for allowing me speak in front of you today.

For the record, my name is Gregory Marshall. I produce wheat, soybeans, and sunflowers on a farm just west of Minot. I also serve as an Advisory member to the North Central Research Extension Center (NCREC) of Minot.

Today, I want to stress to you the importance of the North Dakota agriculture research centers and the staff that keeps them operational. I began my farming career like many others, by sitting on my dad's lap and steering the pickup, truck, or tractor. As I got more involved in the operation, I learned to refer to North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension Service publications when choosing seed varieties, fertilizer recommendations, weed control recommendations, and numerous other items. They were and are my go to publications for finding the answers for production agriculture. I've seen their research responses when encountering new weeds and chemical resistance weeds. I've seen their responses to insect problems with studies to find the economic threshold levels and control methods. They research crop disease problems by improving and recommending varieties with better resistance and yields.

In the 1930's, spring wheat yields were mostly in the single digits. It took until 1962 before average spring wheat yields were consistently above 20 bushels per acre and in the early 80's we got to 30+ bushels per acre. The 40+ bushel per acre range came around 2009 and continued to rise to last years surveyed average of 50 bushels per acre. Those increases would not have happened without the support from the State of North Dakota and the funds made available for field staff, research programs, breeding programs, and seed increase programs.

Spring wheat is only one of many crops that are prevalent in the state of North Dakota. North Dakota raises a wide variety of crops and livestock and ranks at the top or near the top in the production of many of those crops. Those crops include all dry edible beans, canola, flaxseed, honey, dry edible peas, Durum wheat, spring wheat, barley, lentils, sunflowers, sugar beets, and potatoes. Those research programs undertaken by NDSU and the Extension Centers touches each of those crops. In addition to the crops, there are livestock research programs that bring a better product to the consumer's table and add more value to the producer. With the diversity of crops and livestock, it takes a great deal of hours and research to have the answers for the state's agriculture producers.

I and others have a real concern that we are losing qualified staff when we have to compete with private sector wages. It doesn't matter if you have the funds available for a research project if you don't have

the staff to do the work. Please continue to support the programs with funding that will allow the hiring and retention of qualified staff.

When Covid hit, we saw how supply chain disruptions can limit the consumer's choices. This last year, at the local Walmart and the local grocery stores, I've seen limited supplies in the meat department, low milk inventories, and food items that seem to be in limited supply. I hope we never see those types of food choices due to the lack of support for research programs. I want to thank you for your past support and ask that you please continue supporting North Dakota agriculture going forward.

Thank you.

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