

Testimony to North Dakota Senate Appropriations Committee: HB 1020
North Dakota State University
North Central Research Extension Center, Minot, ND
March 9, 2023

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee and discuss a few of the significant research and extension accomplishments of the North Central Research Extension Center (NCREC) that directly impact North Dakotans. For the record, I am Shana Forster, director of the NDSU North Central Research Extension Center located in Minot, ND.

The NCREC's current mission areas include agronomy research, pulse crops breeding, Extension education in the areas of cropping systems, forage crops production, and crop protection, Foundation seed increase, weed science research, and winter hardy grapes. We strive to provide unbiased, scientific information to farmers and ranchers. I will provide a few updates on current research and Extension programs.

Dr. Brian Jenks, weed scientist at the NCREC has been evaluating weed seed submitted by farmers for many years. Specialty crop block grants from the ND Department of Agriculture provide funding support for this research. During the 2022 growing season, many crop consultants and farmers reported issues after herbicide application in that the weed kochia was not controlled effectively. For the last few months, these kochia populations were screened in the NCREC greenhouse and Dr. Jenks determined that some kochia populations in western ND likely have developed resistance to two commonly used preplant burndown herbicides. These preplant herbicides are of utmost importance to producers, especially those practicing minimal tillage. The loss of these herbicides leaves farmers with limited control options, but the information provided by this research enables farmers to make the best management decisions for their operations.

All North Dakota State University Extension Specialists work closely with our county-based Extension agents. Two Extension Specialists housed out of the NCREC, Dr. Leo Bortolon and Dr. James Rogers have worked collaboratively with NDSU Extension agent, Rachel Wald in McHenry county on a critical issue; soil health, specifically how to best manage unproductive areas of a field. Drs. Bortolon and Rogers have the technical expertise, background and knowledge in cropping systems and forage production to best solve these problems in order to make recommendations for managing sites to better improve crop and livestock production.

The critical priority at the NCREC is hiring and retaining diverse candidates to strengthen and expand our research and Extension activities. SBARE considers this the critical need for the NDSU AES and Extension. In addition, an increase in operating is needed to support our research and Extension activities. Operating money will be used to pursue additional collaborative projects within our NDSU network and with outside scientific partners. A machine storage shed at the NCREC will allow us to properly store valuable research equipment.

I extend my thank you to this committee and the entire North Dakota Legislature for your support

Shana M. Forster, Director
North Central Research Extension Center
5400 Hwy 83 S (701) 857-7679
Minot, ND 58701 shana.forster@ndsu.edu