



U.S. Durum Growers Association

PROMOTING THE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF DURUM AND SEMOLINA

P.O. Box 1091 • Bismarck, ND 58502 • (701) 214-3203
office@durumgrowers.com • www.durumgrowers.com

**Testimony of Steve Perdue
Policy Committee Chair
HB 1020
March 2, 2023**

Chairman Bekkedahl and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, my name is Steve Perdue, and I am a farmer from Ray and serve as the policy committee chair for the U.S. Durum Growers Association (USDGA). On behalf of USDGA, I would like to express support of HB 1020 as we recognize the significant importance of ag research, extension and the Northern Crops Institute to the future of agriculture in North Dakota.

USDGA has represented the nation's durum growers for more than 60 years. Today, we represent grower and industry members from 10 states, with North Dakota producing 50-60 percent of the nation's durum.

USDGA supports the efforts of the State Board of Agriculture Research and Education (SBARE) in prioritizing the research and education needs of the state's ag community. USDGA participated in the SBARE information gathering process, as did dozens of other ag organizations, and would urge the Division's favorable consideration of its priorities.

Specifically, USDGA cannot overstate the importance of the capital improvement request of the field lab facility. This facility would address the modernization needs of Waldron Hall, Widakas laboratory, the potato research laboratory, and the horticulture laboratory. The Field Lab Facility would house the durum breeding program as well as other programs that affect durum production. Updating these facilities is critical to the future of the durum industry in North Dakota. With North Dakota producing more than half of the nation's durum, NDSU's durum breeding program and research of plant disease and insect pests is top priority to the association. The durum breeding program is known around the nation, if not the world.

We also encourage your continued support of the Northern Crops Institute (NCI). NCI's collaborative efforts to support the promotion and market development of crops grown in a four-state region is more important than ever. NCI's educational and technical programs are essential to not only maintaining, but expanding, domestic and international markets for northern-grown crops, including durum.

Agriculture is and will continue to be the foundation of our state's economy. Even in times of low commodity prices, our families will continue to be here buying groceries, patronizing local businesses and contributing to the state's economy. We appreciate your past support and urge your continued support of ag research and extension.