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**Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
Senate Agriculture Committee**

Chairman Luick and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1437. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's members. NDFU supports HB 1437.

HB 1437 establishes regional livestock planning grants. This opt-in, voluntary program provides grants to regional planning councils or counties for two purposes:

1. To fund rural development site analyses; and
2. To assist townships in reviewing and updating zoning and land use regulations.

The rural development site analysis provides leaders with information and resources to support well-informed decisions regarding economic development opportunities. Specifically, the analysis helps counties identify sites suitable for livestock and other value-added agriculture development. A copy of a completed rural development site analysis is attached to my testimony.

The rural development site analysis was completed in roughly 90 percent of South Dakota counties. Currently, two pilots are being conducted in Traill and Ransom counties in North Dakota.

The legislation also provides regional planning councils or counties funding to help townships review and update their zoning requirements. This technical assistance provides townships with the resources they need to make well-informed zoning decisions.

HB 1437 is an important component of a broader suite of bills aimed at supporting locally led livestock and value-added development. Earlier this session, this committee approved SB 2373, a bill that has now passed both chambers unanimously. SB 2373 establishes a Livestock Friendly County (LFC) designation. The site analysis included in HB 1437 is a requirement for counties who choose to pursue the LFC designation.

SB 2373 provides a framework that helps counties develop a comprehensive strategy for promoting livestock development. HB 1437 provides the foundation for developing that strategy. This bill will provide counties with the foundational information they need to assess their opportunities for economic development.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. NDFU requests a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1437. I will stand for any questions.