

**\*\*Good afternoon,\*\*** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is DeAnna Lozensky, and together with my husband, Kelly, I operate a 2,800-acre plant-based grain farm in Ward County, North Dakota, with a strong focus on soil conservation. In 2013, we transitioned from conventional farming to regenerative agriculture, implementing soil health principles to improve ecosystem resilience and long-term viability of our 4th generation farm. We grow a variety of crops including yellow peas, yellow mustard, flax and small grains. We believe that soil health is the foundation of both human and animal health.

This philosophy led us to establish *\*Guardian Grains\**, a growing food brand that allows us to sell a portion of our harvest directly to consumers, restaurants, and bakeries.

In 2022, we began growing a few different varieties of ancient wheat, Egyptian Hulless barley and spelt. APUC played a critical role in the expansion of our whole grain business. Their initial funding enabled us to invest in a New American Stone Mill to produce fresh flour for consumers and heritage artisan pasta with our ancient wheat. The funding also helped cover essential packaging costs for whole grains, flour, and pasta. The APUC funding while it supplied crucial equipment, we were also able to partner with organizations like the Great Plains Food Bank to provide our 100% heritage whole wheat pasta to food pantries, helping to nourish communities across our state. As a result, our business experienced a 59% growth by 2023.

In 2024, additional APUC funding allowed us to further develop our market presence in North Dakota through digital and local magazine marketing, as well as comprehensive nutritional testing on 17 of our products. This testing was instrumental in positioning our grains for larger-scale buyers—businesses that purchase by the 50,000-pound truckload rather than by the 35-pound bucket. Proven nutritional testing helps drive larger markets in North Dakota and beyond.

While we continue to leverage these marketing resources, our business grew an additional 40% last year, a testament to APUC's commitment to enhancing the value of North Dakota's agricultural products. APUC helped us create an outlet for consumers to learn more about North Dakota conservation agriculture and how it can improve the future of food production on our North Dakota farms. APUC was instrumental in building a foundation to better utilize the grains grown on our farm.

Beyond business growth, APUC has profoundly influenced our perspective as farmers. By marketing directly to consumers, restaurants, and bakeries, we have shifted from

growing commodities to producing high-quality, nutritious food—food that nourishes our family, our neighbors, and our community. As farmers we are entrusted to produce nutritious food for both animals and people. We are passionate about spreading the message and the importance of true Whole Foods that are coming off North Dakota farms. We and many other recipients are grateful for the APUC funding to help expand both our markets and awareness to consumers of how food is grown and processed in our state.

Thank you for your time today.