

Testimony to North Dakota Senate Appropriations Committee: SB 2020
North Dakota State University
North Central Research Extension Center, Minot, ND
March 2025

Chairman Monson and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to address you today and share some of the significant impacts of the North Central Research Extension Center (NCREC) that directly benefit North Dakota farmers and ranchers. For the record, I am Shana Forster, director of the NCREC in Minot. We provide unbiased, science-based information to support farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses in the region since our founding in HB 66, which passed in 1945.

Thank you for the state-appropriated project from the previous session, which supported the construction of a new 70' x 110' steel-framed machine storage shed. This facility will shelter valuable research equipment, extending its life and ensuring it continues to support our work.

We also thank you for the generous compensation and benefits package and the equity adjustments provided in the previous session.

In 2022, Dr. Brian Jenks, the NCREC weed scientist, received widespread reports from farmers, chemical company technical reps and agronomists concerned about ineffective kochia control in field crops. Dr. Jenks quickly pivoted his research program to work in this area and discovered that some kochia populations in western ND had developed resistance to commonly used pre-plant burndown herbicides.

The impact of this information was vast: 1) research provided farmers with information one year faster than previously available, 2) research saved wasted herbicide expense in the current year (~\$12-25/A), 3) results helped avoid yield loss due to uncontrolled weeds (heavy density > 70-90% yield loss), 4) helped avoid millions of weed seed added to soil seed bank that would add weed control costs for years to come, 5) this information was useful to all growers across North Dakota and 6) it also provided research data to the EPA to approve new weed control options. Weed resistance is a growing problem nationally and globally.

I tell this story for two reasons:

1. Without the state-appropriated operating dollars provided to the NCREC, Dr. Jenks would not have been able to remain flexible and responsive to this new, emerging issue. There was no time to submit new grants and wait for funding approval. This research was needed now and, in some cases, even yesterday.
2. Without our trained, skilled and valuable research specialists and technical support at the NCREC, this research would not have been possible.

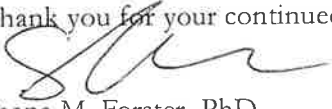
Currently, only 29% of technical support comes from state-appropriated dollars. This significantly impacts our work. The NCREC scientists must chase after grant money and conduct fee-for-service trials to maintain staff. We want them to be flexible and adapt to new issues like weed resistance. The NCREC has had no new state-appropriated research positions since the 2007 legislative session.



Requests for State-funding Support

We are requesting **state-appropriated funding for a research specialist to work in our agronomy research program** to meet the needs of our constituency. We are requesting **state-appropriated funding for a research specialist dedicated to our grape/vineyard program** to continue this program. We request **an increase in operating dollars** to remain flexible and responsive to new and emerging issues like weed resistance. Operating money is essential to the entire REC network due to increased costs in all areas.

Thank you for your continued support of the NDSU REC network and SBARE initiatives.



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