



U.S. Durum Growers Association

PROMOTING THE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF DURUM AND SEMOLINA

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**Testimony of Steve Perdue
President
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Chairman Wanzek and members of the Senate Appropriations- Government Operations Division Committee, my name is Steve Perdue, and I'm a farmer from Ray and serve as the president of the U.S. Durum Growers Association (USDGA). On behalf of the USDGA, we support SB 2020 as agriculture research, extension and education is essential to the future of maintaining a sustainable agriculture economy within the state.

USDGA has served to promote the production and marketing of durum wheat and semolina since 1978. The association represents grower and industry members from 10 states. We have many members from North Dakota as the acres produced in the state account for just over half of the country's durum production.

USDGA supports the efforts of the State Board of Agriculture and Education (SBARE) in prioritizing the 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 Committee's favorable consideration of its priorities.

Ag research and extension has provided high value to producers across the state. With research into ag trade and policy as well as new and upcoming technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), will help our producers to continue to provide the most high-quality products to the world.

We also encourage continued support of the Northern Crops Institute (NCI). NCI is vital to expanding markets of northern grown crops and the education and technical programs offered are essential to not only maintaining but expanding domestic and international markets for northern-grown crops, including durum. NCI's education and training also provide support and growth to the agriculture industry.

Agriculture is vital to North Dakota's economy and USDGA believes the priorities given by SBARE will support the current and future landscape of agriculture research, extension and education. USDGA appreciates your past support and urges you to continue supporting SBARE priorities.