

**North Dakota Stockmen's Association**  
**SB 2020 – Experiment Stations**  
**Senate Appropriations Government Operations Committee**  
**Red River Room**  
**Jan. 16, 2025**

Good morning, Chairman Wanzek and members of the Senate Appropriations' Government Operations Committee. My name is Julie Ellingson, and I represent the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, a 95-year-old beef cattle trade organization comprised of approximately 3,100 members across the state.

I am not sure how the legislative bill numbering system came about, but, as you know, every other legislative session, the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE) budget is deemed SB 2020. Usually when we hear 20/20, we think of it as a reference to perfect vision – a measure of visual acuity and clarity. And I cannot help but think how perfect that is for the bill before you this morning – a forward-looking, visionary budget identifying critical investments with proven returns for our no. 1 industry, agriculture, and the state's overall economy. We join with our agricultural colleagues in enthusiastic support of the bill, as it represents programs and projects prioritized by SBARE through its comprehensive process.

As you look through the Experiment Station's priority list, there are a lot of things for a cattle producer to like. That's one of the reasons the bill was endorsed by our members at our annual convention. This morning, I will highlight just a few:

In fact, priority 1, the Center for Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies initiative, was also the NDSA's no. 1 priority when we shared our thoughts in the last SBARE listening rounds.

No question, cattle ranching is big business, and research into the effects of national and international policies and trade on our industry is needed in order to be competitive on the global stage. To put that into dollars and cents for a North Dakota cattleman or cattlemwoman, international beef sales add somewhere in the neighborhood of \$400 in value per fed animal in the United States. That's real money, and so it's important we have the information we need at our disposal to make informed, evidence-based decisions.

Our industry also has real corresponding financial risk. Analysis and resources to help farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses navigate market complexities and guard against risk associated with international relations, trade dynamics and other factors are crucial for us to survive. The ag policy analyst, market and trade analyst and economic impact specialist included in this initiative will help in these regards. We think these professionals can also help producers in our industry adopt and better understand risk management tools, such as the Livestock Risk Protection product that has become increasingly popular with some recent enhancements or likely upcoming tools like the Weaned Calf Revenue Program being piloted in neighboring South Dakota, and can help us stabilize our positions and do long-term financial planning.

The Livestock/Animal Health initiative, as you would guess, is also important to us, and would add a needed resident veterinary toxicologist to the very capable team at the NDSU Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, bearing the name of our dear friend, the late former Sen. Bill Bowman who, for years, sat in these very chairs and helped shepherd this budget. The toxicologist will play a vital role in supporting the state's livestock industry by developing assays for the detection of things like mycotoxin, blister beetle toxin and other challenges that can be catastrophic for those in animal agriculture.

Finally, we are fortunate to have some of the best scientists in the world working on the NDSU team, but, without adequate operating budgets, equipment and support, their ability to deliver to their potential is limited. Therefore, even though initiative no. 4 might not seem as flashy or exciting as some of the others on the list, to us, it is a necessity, as it is foundational to the outcomes and success of the overall Experiment Station system.

Thank you for the consideration of these priorities and for all the support you have provided to help keep agriculture strong.

I would be happy to take any questions you have.