

CHAPTER 04.1-01.1
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS UTILIZATION COMMISSION

4.1-01.1-01. Agricultural products utilization commission - Composition - Appointment.

The agricultural products utilization commission shall administer the agricultural products utilization fund. The commission shall consist of nine members, five of whom must be appointed by the agriculture commissioner for terms of two years each, arranged so that two terms expire in odd-numbered years and three terms expire in even-numbered years. Four members appointed by the agriculture commissioner must be actively engaged in farming in this state and one member appointed by the agriculture commissioner must be actively engaged in business in this state. The governor shall appoint one member for a term of two years which expires in odd-numbered years. The member appointed by the governor must be actively engaged in business in this state. Commission members may be reappointed. Terms of commissioners commence on the first day of July. The commissioner of commerce, the president of North Dakota state university, and the agriculture commissioner, or their designees, are members of the commission. The commission shall elect one of its members as chairman.

4.1-01.1-02. Agricultural products utilization commission - Authority.

1. The North Dakota agricultural products utilization commission may apply for, accept, and expend any appropriation, grant, gift, or service made available from public or private sources.
2. The commission may administer grant programs including:
 - a. A basic and applied research grant program;
 - b. A utilization and marketing grant program;
 - c. A cooperative marketing grant program;
 - d. A nature-based tourism grant program;
 - e. A technical assistance grant program for value-added businesses;
 - f. A farm diversification grant program;
 - g. An agricultural prototype development grant program;
 - h. An agricultural technologies grant program; and
 - i. A North American marketing grant program.
3. As a condition of any grant administered by the commission, the commission may require the recipient repay some or all of the grant if the recipient does not fulfill the conditions of the grant. Repayment may be monetary or any other type or method determined by the commission.

4.1-01.1-03. Agricultural products utilization commission - Meetings - Personnel - Reports.

The agricultural products utilization commission, an office of the agriculture commissioner, shall meet as necessary and shall report to each session of the legislative assembly. The commissioner shall provide office space, employ required personnel for the performance of its duties, hire consultants, spend any funds appropriated to the commission, and contract with public entities or private parties for services.

4.1-01.1-04. Agricultural products utilization commission - Reimbursement - Compensation.

Members of the agricultural products utilization commission are entitled to be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, in the same manner as other state officials are reimbursed, according to sections 44-08-04 and 54-06-09. If not otherwise employed by the state of North Dakota, members of the commission are entitled to receive per diem compensation of one hundred thirty-five dollars for each day of attending meetings and performing other duties relating to official business of the commission. The commission chairman, if not otherwise employed by the state of North Dakota, may receive an additional

one hundred dollars for each day of a regular meeting attended as payment for reviewing and evaluating grant proposals.

4.1-01.1-05. Agricultural products utilization commission - Administrative expenses.

Administrative expenses of the agricultural products utilization commission, including expenses of members of the commission, employment of required personnel, hiring of consultants, and contracting with public or private entities for services may not exceed ten percent of the funds appropriated to the commission by the legislative assembly each biennium, excluding federal funds.

4.1-01.1-06. Agricultural products utilization fund - Purposes.

The agricultural products utilization fund in the state treasury must be used to fund programs for agricultural research, equipment, development, processing, technology, and marketing. The fund must be used to defray the expenses of the North Dakota agricultural products utilization commission. Interest earned on moneys in the fund must be credited to the fund.

4.1-01.1-07. Agriculture diversification and development fund - Continuing appropriation.

1. There is created in the state treasury the agriculture diversification and development fund. The fund consists of all moneys transferred to the fund by the legislative assembly, interest upon moneys in the fund, and payments of interest and principal on loans made from the fund. Moneys in the fund are appropriated to the Bank of North Dakota on a continuing basis for loan disbursements, grants, and administrative costs pursuant to this section. No more than twenty-five percent of the fund may be utilized for grants in a biennium.
2. Loans, interest rate buydowns, or grants may be issued from the fund to support new or expanding value-added agriculture businesses that demonstrate financial feasibility, enhance profitability for farmers and ranchers, create jobs, and grow the state's economy. Value-added agriculture businesses include food production or processing facilities; feed or pet food processing facilities; commodity processing facilities; agriculture product manufacturers; and animal agriculture production facilities, including swine, poultry, dairy, and feed lot production facilities.
3. The Bank of North Dakota shall develop policies in consultation with the agriculture diversification and development committee. The Bank shall review loan applications. To be eligible for a loan under this section, an entity shall agree to provide the Bank with information as requested. The Bank may develop policies for loan participation with local financial institutions. The Bank shall deposit in the fund all principal and interest paid on the outstanding loans. The Bank may use a portion of the interest paid as a servicing fee to pay for administrative costs, which may not exceed one-half of one percent of the amount of the outstanding loans. The Bank shall contract with a certified public accounting firm to audit the fund if the fund has any loans. The cost of the audit must be paid from the fund.

4.1-01.1-08. Agriculture diversification and development committee.

1. The agriculture diversification and development committee consists of eleven members, five of whom must be appointed by the commissioner for terms of two years each, arranged so that two terms expire in odd-numbered years and three terms expire in even-numbered years.
 - a. Four of the members appointed by the commissioner must be actively engaged in farming in this state and the fifth member appointed by the commissioner must be actively engaged in agribusiness in this state.
 - b. The governor shall appoint one member for a term of two years which expires in odd-numbered years.

- c. The member appointed by the governor must be actively engaged in business in this state.
 - d. The remaining committee members must consist of:
 - (1) One representative from the independent community banks of North Dakota;
 - (2) One representative from the North Dakota bankers association;
 - (3) The commissioner of commerce or the commissioner's designee;
 - (4) The president of North Dakota state university or the president's designee; and
 - (5) The agriculture commissioner or the commissioner's designee.
 - e. The committee shall elect one of its members as chairman.
2. The agriculture diversification and development committee shall develop guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria and reporting requirements. The guidelines must include priority for businesses with a majority of the ownership comprised of North Dakota residents. The agriculture diversification and development committee shall review grant applications and make funding determinations.

4.1-01.1-09. Agriculture diversification and development fund grants program - Access to records.

1. To the extent the agriculture diversification and development committee determines the materials or data provided under section 4.1-01.1-07 consist of trade secrets or commercial, financial, or proprietary information of individuals or entities applying for grants with the committee, materials and data submitted to, made by, or received by the committee, are not public records subject to section 44-04-18 and section 6 of article XI of the Constitution of North Dakota, and are subject to section 44-04-18.4.
2. A person may file a request with the committee to have material designated as confidential under subsection 1. The request must contain any information required by the committee and must include at least the following:
 - a. A general description of the nature of the information sought to be protected;
 - b. An explanation of why the information derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to other persons;
 - c. An explanation of why the information is not readily ascertainable by proper means of other persons;
 - d. A general description of any person that may obtain economic value from disclosure or use of the information, and how the person may obtain this value; and
 - e. A description of the efforts used to maintain the secrecy of the information.
3. A request under subsection 2 is confidential. The committee shall examine the request and determine whether the information is relevant to the matter at hand and is a trade secret under the definition in section 47-25.1-01 or 44-04-18.4. If the committee determines the information is not relevant or not a trade secret, the committee shall notify the requester and the requester may ask for the return of the information and the request within ten days of the notice. If no return is sought, the information and request are public records.
4. The names or identities of independent technical reviewers on a project or program are confidential, may not be disclosed by the committee, and are not public records subject to section 44-04-18 or section 6 of article XI of the Constitution of North Dakota.