



**North Dakota Grain Growers Association
Testimony in Support of SB 2020
House Appropriations Committee
Government Operations Division
March 11, 2025**

Chairman Monson, Members of the House Appropriations Committee Government Operations Division, for the record my name is Dan Wogsland representing the North Dakota Grain Growers Association (NDGGA). NDGGA strongly supports the appropriations for the NDSU Extension and the North Dakota Agriculture Experiment Station.

In SB2020's current form, the base budgets have been reduced by 4.7% and 3% for NDSU Extension and the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station respectively. These institutions are the backbone of agriculture innovation and education. They provide critical research and education that directly benefits grain producers and the entire agriculture industry. These budgets must be restored in order for NDSU Extension and Research to adequately meet the needs of farmers and ranchers across our state.

NDGGA strongly supports the State Board of Agriculture Research and Education (SBARE) and their prioritization efforts regarding the needs of North Dakota agriculture and science-based education for North Dakota citizens. North Dakota agriculture is extremely diverse across the state. The membership of SBARE is made up of agriculturists from around the state who understand that diversity. SBARE had a robust way of gathering input from stakeholders and the prioritization process itself is rigorous. This means the legislature can be sure that the priority lists presented today really are the education and agriculture research needs of North Dakota. There are 49 other states in this nation that wish they had what North Dakota has enjoyed since Governor Jack Dalrymple initiated the push to have stakeholder input regarding the needs of North Dakota agriculture.

The positive impacts of NDSU Extension and North Dakota Experiment State and Extension for critical research and education are vast. NDGGA strongly believes they are critical to the success of wheat, barley, and durum production in this state. Here are some examples of how NDSU Extension and the North Dakota Agriculture Experiment Station have positively impacted our industry:

- One of the most devastating plant diseases the grain industry has realized in North Dakota is Fusarium Head Blight (scab). This continues to be an issue farmers and agronomists manage every year. In 2024 alone, NDSU Extension's guidance on managing Fusarium head blight saved wheat producers between \$500,000 and \$2 million dollars in input costs.
- Wheat, barley, and durum growers depend on the plant breeding and variety development programs in the North Dakota Agriculture Experiment Station. These varieties help our industry produce the high-quality product our consumers demand and improve yields for the farmers. Keep in mind that durum and barley are specialty crops with relatively low acreage nationally. This means it is difficult for private industry to invest research and development dollars into these crops. North Dakota is fortunate to have plant breeding industries to support these industries.
 - The spring wheat plant breeding program not only improving yields but also maintaining quality. In 2024, over 550,000 acres of spring wheat were planted to NDSU variety releases which resulted in an economic impact of over \$69 million dollars.
 - The Durum industry depends on NDSU variety releases, as 90% of the Durum acreage is planted with NDSU varieties, adding over \$270 million annually of economic impact.

These are just a few examples of how North Dakota's grain industry depends on NDSU Extension and the North Dakota Agriculture Experiment Station. NDGGA strongly supports the work of the North Dakota Agriculture Experiment Station and NDSU Extension because they play a critical role in the success of the grain industry in North Dakota.

NDGGA would like to highlight three important initiatives on the SBARE priority list which include:

1. Center for Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies (CAPTS): This program provides critical analysis of trade policies and global market conditions that directly impact North Dakota grain producers. In today's volatile international trade environment, this research is more important than ever.

2. Extension Carbon Specialist: The new carbon specialist within Extension will help our producers navigate the rapidly evolving carbon markets and credit programs, potentially opening new revenue streams while promoting sustainable practices.

3. We also want to strongly emphasize the need for adequate operating funds as requested in the SBARE prioritization. While creating new positions and programs is important, these initiatives cannot succeed without proper operating support. Research and Extension personnel need resources to conduct field trials, develop educational materials, travel to producer meetings, and maintain facilities. Inadequate operating funds significantly diminish the return on investment for personnel expenditures.

In conclusion, NDGGA strongly supports SB2020 and the work of the North Dakota Agriculture Experiment Station and NDSU Extension. The funding in SB2020 will enable our research and extension professionals to continue delivering science-based solutions that help grain producers remain competitive, profitable, and sustainable.

NDGGA also strongly supports the SBARE and their prioritization process for the North Dakota Agriculture Experiment Station and NDSU Extension. The partnership between North Dakota producers and NDSU through the SBARE process has created one of the most effective agricultural research and extension systems in the nation.

NDGGA asks for the base budgets of the North Dakota Agriculture Experiment Station and NDSU Extension to be restored, provide operating support for these entities, and consider the SBARE Priority List.

Thank you for your time. I would stand for any questions.