

March 9, 2021 Written Testimony for the House Appropriations Education and Environment Committee

Chairman Monson and Members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Committee,

I am Jerry Bergman, Director of the NDSU Williston Research Extension Center (WREC).

I thank the North Dakota Legislative Assembly during the past session for the authorization for us to have a capital campaign drive for a new seed conditioning plant at the WREC and for \$750,000 in general funds for the project.

To date, the WREC Capital Campaign has raised over \$1.9 million dollars. Construction of the plant is well underway and we expect the seed conditioning plant will be completely and fully operational by September 2021.

We also thank you for your authorization of \$500,000 for capital campaign for a greenhouse at WREC. The capital campaign drive has so far raised over \$400,000.

The WREC/EARC Advisory Board has stated a critical need for a Livestock Research/Extension Specialist at the WREC by passing unanimously a resolution to request funding for this position. The Advisory Board feels this position is the missing key for an integrated cropping/livestock program for northwest North Dakota.

Another critical need is for an equipment storage building at the Nesson Valley Irrigated site 23 miles northeast of Williston to store high cost farm and irrigated plot equipment indoors from the elements.

Williston Research Extension Center (WREC) Impacts

1. Produced over 40,000 bushels of foundation seed of 24 varieties of small grains and broadleaf crops.
2. Developed and utilized a 160-acre irrigated site to identify improved irrigated cropping and tillage systems, water use efficiency, and soil health.
3. Continue a pipeline reclamation research project to develop best treatments to restore crop yields and soil health.
4. Established a high tunnel research project with vegetable crops and cut flowers.
5. Established and continue a saline seep reclamation research and demonstration project in collaboration with the Montana Salinity Control Association.
6. Continue the plant pathology research program to develop disease management practices to reduce disease.
7. Established a long term no-till cropping systems research project to develop dryland farming systems to improve soil health and sustainable cropping systems.
8. Conduct dryland and irrigated variety testing to assess which varieties perform best in the region in a neutral, non-bias basis.
9. Conduct unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) research to develop UAS based data collections to collect agronomic data quickly, frequently, and precisely.
10. Extension Specialist leads extension programming and outreach, county extension agents with training on agronomy, weed science, weed identification, weed control, reclamation, and integrations of crops/livestock.