

Testimony for the NDSU Hettinger Research Extension Center
Submitted by Christopher Schauer, Director Hettinger Research Extension Center
House Appropriations Hearing – SB2020
March 9, 2021

Thank you Chairman Monson and members of the House Appropriations Committee. For the Record, my name is Christopher Schauer and I am the Director of the Hettinger Research Extension Center. Our summary is on page 37 of the book and this testimony has been submitted online.

Thank you for your continued support during the last legislative session. Much has changed in our world since then, but much has stayed the same in Agriculture. In spite of COVID, our research team of Agronomy, Weed Science, Wildlife Biology, and Animal Science has had a busy year and are proud to report that we accomplished the vast majority of the research we planned on conducting this field season. We started bringing in summer technicians and graduate students in early April, providing them 14-day quarantines, and began our summer on June 1 with a full research team ready to go to work, albeit with many new restrictions. Our graduate students completed their programs during the summer, and we are preparing right now for the next field season. We are fully staffed and anticipate a busy summer of research.

That brings us to our most important request – maintenance of our current budget so we can continue to conduct the research and extension that our producers in ND expect from us. Any reductions in operating budgets will result in a decrease of research output. Our program currently utilizes our research team, plus, we train around 5 graduate students and a dozen summer college and high school interns each summer. Maintaining our research team at its current level is our #1 request for programmatic funding. When we look at the SBARE priority list for Capital Projects, I realize the challenging times we are in. However, those needs are just as important today as they were a year ago prior to COVID. Waldron Hall is in desperate need of replacement as the Agronomy, Pathology, and Soils Lab, and is an investment not only for campus based research programs, but also benefits all REC scientists through our collaboration with these programs. The 2nd initiative in the capital request is for upgrading of the Livestock Research Facilities at the Carrington, Central Grasslands, and Hettinger RECs. All 3 facilities have different needs, but in the case of the Hettinger REC, very little state funding investment in livestock facilities has occurred in the past 50 years. In fact, our “newest” barn was built in the early 70’s (50 years ago), with the next newest barn being built in 1909 (111 years ago) when we were founded. We appreciate that the Senate including some funding for the overall livestock facility initiative by including funds for Carrington and Central Grasslands REC as well as the addition of an equipment storage facility for the HREC. However, I do ask you to look at the rest of the livestock facility initiative as our request and #1 facility need at the HREC is the Livestock Processing and Research Support Facility. This facility would be the cornerstone of our livestock research efforts for the next 100 years.

In closing, I thank you for your past support and am looking forward to another productive biennium. I will entertain any questions.