

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Lee Briese. I am a private crop consultant in central North Dakota and I work directly with farmers to provide agronomic advice for managing pests and crops throughout the season. I'm here today to testify on behalf of NDSU Extension Service and to reiterate that they are critically important for all of the work that happens in North Dakota, not just agriculture, but especially agriculture. That's where I have direct experience. And so one of the things that I think has been critically important in recent times has been a focus on soil and soil management and NDSU has been the leader not only locally, but also nationally and even internationally, in managing soils and getting information out there. And as you all know, in science communication is a challenge and NDSU has done this extremely well, particularly in this area. They have developed several types of different programs. The programming has been in face, it's been online, it's been videos, it's been using social media. It's been very diverse and they're showing how they can use all of these tools to great effect to reach every demographic across the state and they're also supporting other people and they're coming to us because NDSU has the answers that people need. That is critically important.

One other thing I wanted to mention is I've had the opportunity to visit several other states and even Canadian provinces and see that their agricultural science backbone and their support and I would say that our support is exemplar. It's doing a fantastic job and directly affecting our producers in the state. I have seen evidence where other places have lost budgets. They've lost personnel and when Extension loses personnel, they lose core parts of their business and the ability to interact with their consumer and that has been a terrible thing to witness. And in those places where they tried to substitute it in with a heavy online presence, the Extension program has dwindled and it has stressed those people tremendously and actually, the consumer is going to other avenues. I really hope that you reconsider your proposed budget for NDSU and the Extension Service. Thank you for your time.