

January 20, 2021 Written Testimony for Senate Appropriations Committee

Chairman Holmberg and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

I am Jerry Bergman, Director of the NDSU Williston Research Extension Center (WREC). I support the SBARE Recommendations to restore the North Dakota Ag Experiment Station (NDAES) and NDSU Extension and NDSU Research Extension Centers to 100% of the 2019-2021 appropriation.

With a 95% level of funding to WREC, the WREC budget will need to be cut an additional \$142,915 and will eliminate an equivalent of one state general funded staff position. This budget reduction will significantly decrease our dryland and irrigated research capabilities.

A new horizontal seed cleaning facility with innovative optical sorting technology and dust control system is currently under construction and will improve our seed cleaning efficiency and address worker safety concerns but also allow us to handle and condition pulse crops and other specialty crops of ever-increasing importance in our dryland and irrigated cropping systems. To date, the WREC Capital Campaign for the seed conditioning facility has received \$1.9 million in donations and \$68,000 in pledges. We thank the North Dakota legislative assembly for authorizing this capital campaign and providing \$750,000 in general funds for the facility. We expect the seed conditioning facility to be fully operational by September 2021.

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.