



Contact:
Matt Perdue, Lobbyist
mperdue@ndfu.org | 701.641.3303

**Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
Senate Appropriations Committee
January 20, 2021**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2020. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's (NDFU) members.

NDFU supports SB 2020, which maintains baseline funding for North Dakota State University's agriculture research and extension programs. We urge the committee to reject proposed cuts to these critical programs.

NDSU's agricultural research and extension services have been crucial to the success of family farmers and ranchers for generations. Their work helps farmers and ranchers improve their productivity, combat disease, mitigate risk and embrace more sustainable farming practices. NDSU Extension also provides leadership training for youth and adults, programs that support personal wellness and strong families, and nutrition and food safety guidance. In short, NDSU's agriculture research and extension promotes the prosperity and well-being of all North Dakotans.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of NDSU Extension and its commitment to our state. Unable to offer face-to-face programs for much of the year, NDSU Extension quickly pivoted to offering virtual programs. These webinars helped farmers navigate a rapidly changing marketplace, access new federal programs and stay healthy and safe. Ultimately, NDSU Extension managed to host 4,600 program sessions and increase participation in those programs by more than 34,000 compared to 2019.

The proposed 15% budget cut to NDSU Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Station would have devastating impacts on the services they provide. Those cuts would eliminate a total of 53 researchers and extension professionals who contribute greatly to the success of our farmers and ranchers and quality of life in our rural communities. We urge the committee to reject those cuts and support additional investments in new initiatives that will help move our state's agriculture industry forward.

NDFU also supports continued funding for the Northern Crops Institute (NCI). NCI takes a unique approach to expanding domestic and international markets for crops grown in our region. They identify and actually





create new customers by helping domestic and international buyers realize the value and uses of crops grown in the region. NCI gives North Dakota producers a competitive edge.

Finally, NDFU urges the committee to maintain funding for the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute. UGPTI's research helps the state assess our infrastructure needs, adopt innovative and cost-effective approaches to transportation challenges, and embrace new trends and opportunities. With more than \$9 billion of investment needed to maintain county and township roads over the next 20 years, UGPTI's work is critical to our state's success moving forward.

NDFU requests the committee maintain base level funding for each of the line items in SB 2020. Doing so will ensure NDSU can continue to serve as a trusted resource for all North Dakotans. Thank you.

