

January 15, 2021

Senate Appropriations Committee

Re: Central Grasslands Research Extension Center Advisory Board Letter of Support

The Central Grasslands Research Extension Center (CGREC) Advisory Board met January 11, 2021. The board mission is to help the center director and staff conduct research and Extension programming that meet the needs of the rancher, and land managers of the Missouri Coteau Region of North Dakota.

Research generated from the CGREC supplies vital information for North Dakota farmers and ranchers. CGREC collaborates with NDSU main station scientists, and educates producers through on-farm demonstration sites. CGREC provides a third party, unbiased, neutral source of information, whereas chemical or agronomy companies look for research that increases sales and services. Research from the Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) plays a large role in providing truthful, reliable, and relevant research-based information that help producers make decisions that are more informed.

The board recognizes that NDSU, AES, and the Extension Service have taken significant budget cuts since 2016. The state has a large investment in these facilities. North Dakota's land is almost 90% dedicated to agriculture, therefore it is necessary to continue the valuable research the CGREC and AES provide. We believe the investment in these facilities, such as CGREC; give the taxpayers of North Dakota a valuable return on their investment.

The board feels it is vital that the state does not cut the budget for the CGREC. These are challenging times. Ag producers must continually be adapting and innovating to survive the current environment. The CGREC is constantly testing new ideas to help our farmers and ranchers be profitable. Farmers and Ranchers are the backbone of North Dakota, and they deserve the opportunity to utilize the education that the CGREC provides.

In addition to local support, the board knows that the scientific work done at the CGREC is also important to the scientific community worldwide. We also find the CGREC work to be very important to the state and worldwide scientific community. Studies are ongoing to confirm how economic, environmental, and management practices that will affect ranchers, and show how important livestock are to the environment, food security and conservation. The center is successful due to the coordination of great leadership of our researchers throughout the NDSU-REC system, and the distribution of this information to its constituents by using the NDSU Extension.

The center is also an economic engine for the local community and offers opportunities for full and part-time jobs, internships, and graduate students. The center generates \$300,000 to \$400,000 in expenditures annually through purchasing of products and services within a 60-

mile radius of the center and annually hires 12 to 16 part-time and internships – providing an influx of dollars to the local community.

In summary, research conducted at the center provides practical, science-based information and ideas to producers that can be applied to their own farms and ranches. This is important now more than ever as producers face the challenges of tight margins, weather extremes and more pressure to produce in a way that is environmentally sound and sustainable. The unbiased research conducted locally on field scale trials is critical to the economic health of North Dakota, and its farmers and ranchers. Researching new ways and methods of growing crops and raising livestock is what will help producers remain viable in an evolving landscape

Finally, to retain strong leadership and provide for the future of the center, a director's house is needed. The board has supported this need to fund and build a director's house, to not only provide housing to the current director, but for recruiting and retention of future directors.

Sincerely,

Krista Reiser

Krista Reiser, Chair
Central Grasslands Research Extension Center Advisory Board