

**State Board of Agricultural Research and Education
Minutes - January 10, 2003
Best Western Doublewood, Bismarck, ND**

The State Board of Agricultural Research and Education met in Bismarck, North Dakota at the Best Western Doublewood Inn on January 10, 2003 beginning at 9:30 a.m. Members present were: Sharon Anderson, Tim Bryan, Jerry Doan, Neal Fisher, Ed Goerger, Ken Grafton, Jody Hauge, Maynard Helgaas, Patricia Jensen, Burdell Johnson, Roger Johnson, Vern Mayer and Phil Mueller.

Chairman Doan called the meeting to order. Following introductions, the minutes of the December 16, 2003 meeting were approved as distributed.

The board talked about possible ways to increase the Agricultural Research Fund. Although several agriculture commodity representatives previously indicated lack of support for increased taxes, Representative Phil Mueller suggested discussions should continue.

Jerry Doan told SBARE members that a bill is being introduced in the legislature to change the responsibilities of the board. He suggested the importance of educating legislators about SBARE — how it works and how it is the producer's link to NDSU. Doan indicated that he has received positive comments from the Office of Management and Budget about the work of SBARE.

Patricia Jensen stated that it is important to present examples of the good work that SBARE has done and testify to the extraordinary things that would not have happened without the hard work of the board.

Board members discussed strategy for the legislative agriculture budget hearing. All agreed that it is important to encourage producer participation and input at the hearing.

Paul Thomas and Dennis Swanson, representing the North Dakota Buffalo Association visited with the board about the importance of the bison industry in North Dakota. They indicated the industry is on the road to recovery and suggested now is a very opportune time for young producers to get into the business. Swanson stated that producers need bison research and the specific research is very different from that done with beef cattle. Swanson expressed strong support for the efforts of SBARE, but also wanted to convey their request of support for their industry. Patricia Jensen stated she would be willing to meet with representatives of the Buffalo Association to work on acquisition of federal funds to help support the efforts and Phil Mueller suggested looking into the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial effort and possibilities relating to bison and tourism.

Board members talked about the budget recommendations to be presented to the House Appropriations Committee. The recommended allocations for new money included support for feedlot, ag waste management, biofuels, cereal disease forecasting, western malting barley, rural communities initiative, and support for NDSSCC. There were many questions and concerns about the budget process and the seriousness of a 95% budget.

Blaine Schatz, Director at the Carrington Research Extension Center, reported to SBARE that the aquaculture building at Carrington was no longer being used for the fish farm. He stated there were other potential alternative uses for the building space. After discussing uses for the building and associated costs, Jody Hauge made a motion to end the aquaculture program at the Carrington Research Extension Center and look for other ways to utilize the facility. Neal Fisher seconded the motion, which was approved.

There were questions regarding the impact of the feedlot enhancement program on the Carrington center's budget. Schatz responded that the critical areas included a research specialist with ruminant nutrition training (extending expertise of current staff), and operating funds – with flexibility to fund research trials. Schatz also stated he had visited with members of the Carrington REC advisory board about the lack of support for the bison program. He indicated that advisory board members were supportive of the decision to end the current program when they were presented with implications of other types of cuts at the center.

Tim Faller, Director at Hettinger Research Extension Center, stated that the issue of technology at the research centers needs to be discussed. He noted the unfunded costs of operations for the videoconferencing equipment alone have a huge impact on the budgets at the centers.

Central Grasslands Research Extension Center Director, Paul Nyren, also expressed concern about the costs associated with videoconferencing equipment at the centers, noting the importance of prioritization when resources are so limited.

Jerry Bergman, Director at the Williston Research Extension Center, voiced concern with the high cost of operating the videoconferencing equipment and network and raised the question of why local community users could not be offered the use of the equipment for a charge. He noted that currently that procedure is not allowed by the North Dakota University System.

Roger Johnson told board members that they need to be aware that there is going to be another new demand for "ag" money for an extremely invasive weed, saltcedar, that has been identified in hundreds of locations in North Dakota.

Board members talked about the importance of designating ag money set aside by the Office of Management and Budget so it is not redirected by the Legislature. They once again stressed the importance of flexibility in the budget process allowing for adjustments as priorities change.

Maynard Helgaas made a motion to approve the budget recommendation as presented. Neal Fisher seconded the motion, which was approved.

Ed Goerger said it is helpful to have all budget information presented and stated that understanding the entire picture is helpful. He would like an opportunity to go over the budget and program numbers in more detail with help to make numbers more understandable.

Jensen noted that the budget process is ever-changing and it is a challenge to keep all board members engaged in the dynamics of the process. Neal Fisher agreed, but suggested that the better informed board members are, the better they can articulate,

which will help them when visiting with constituents and local legislators about agricultural programs and needs.

Ken Grafton stated it is important to let people know that agriculture programs are constantly being evaluated and the most critical positions at a particular time are filled when possible.

Jerry Doan told SBARE that "BeefLine" has been a great model and one that producers can identify with. He suggested it would be good to develop something similar for crops programs.

Tom Christensen, North Dakota State Soil Conservation Committee, updated SBARE on the committee's budget and shared related concerns. He stated the committee would be trying to make some legislative language revisions and he would appreciate being contacted if questions arise.

Sharon Anderson told SBARE members that she and Ken Grafton would be meeting with Senator Bill Bowman this week to discuss an interest he has expressed in an initiative related to identity preserved beef. Duane Hauck indicated it would be important to look at the value-added plant in Harvey, ND, and capitalize on what is already in place.

Anderson also said that Representative Rick Berg expressed an interest in the Western 4-H Camp near Washburn and a possible connection to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. She has delivered strategic planning documents and noted that interested parties want to be sure that opportunities are not passed by.

The following Agricultural Research Fund granting committee changes were proposed:

Corn Granting Committee - add Robert Stover, Larimore

Sugarbeet Granting Committee - Allan Tucker, St. Thomas to replace Tom Schultz, Crystal and Tim Cayco, East Fairview to replace Charles Flynn, Fairview.

Neal Fisher made a motion to approve the proposed changes. Burdell Johnson seconded the motion, which was approved.

Ken Grafton stated that he had recently met with the ARF Sugarbeet Granting Committee and they expressed some concerns with the process. Board members suggested Lori Capouch, ARF Administrator, work with that committee to resolve issues.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Recorded by Margaret Olson