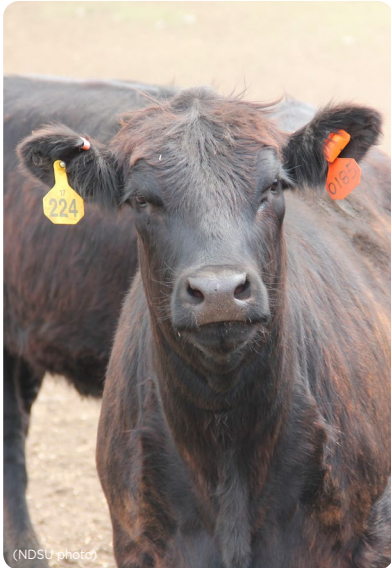


## CRITICAL PRIORITY Request for restoration of general fund reductions:

**Request:** Restoration of 15% budget cut - \$4,156,450



(NDSU photo)



(NDSU photo)

### 1 Livestock Initiative

North Dakota's livestock industry offers ample opportunity for growth. Livestock accounts for 16% of gross agricultural receipts in North Dakota while livestock accounts for approximately 44% of gross agricultural receipts in our neighboring states of Minnesota, Montana and South Dakota. Providing the technical knowledge needed to grow the industry will help close this gap and put North Dakota on par with neighboring states with a more vibrant livestock industry.

During the last 20 years, soybean and corn acreage, two primary feed crops, has grown four to five times, providing an ample supply of feedstuffs for additional livestock production. Growth in the livestock industry means additional market opportunities for currently non-value-added commodity feed grains, coproducts and other agricultural commodities produced in the state.

Enhanced value-added markets for these commodities inject more money into main street businesses across the state and also support additional employment opportunities in livestock operations as well as allied support industries such as trucking, feed and input supply sales, and transportation. In addition, growth in livestock production provides more opportunities for young people to become involved in agriculture. Lastly, grazing livestock also can increase soil health, adding additional benefits to agricultural operations across the state.

NDSU Extension can enhance the livestock industry by serving as a key technical resource and protecting the public health of North Dakotans by enhancing the monitoring and surveillance of zoonotic diseases common to animals and people. Educational programming related to livestock production and management, business and economics, animal health and biosecurity, and grazing management provide needed resources to enhance existing opportunities and develop new opportunities to grow this industry in the state. Educational programs aimed at individuals and communities are needed to help the industry grow and thrive. Emphasis on sound business practices, economics and finance are key to taking advantage of the existing opportunities.

**Request:** Four FTEs total. Off-campus livestock management specialist; agribusiness related livestock development specialist; grazing, forage and cover crop specialist; veterinary epidemiologist. \$160,000 operating support.

**Total:** \$1,010,000

# NDSU Extension Program Initiatives

Final Ranking by SBARE – April 7, 2020

## 2. Agricultural Health and Safety

Agricultural health and safety is in the headlines on nearly a daily basis. Unfortunately, the news is not good. In the past year alone, North Dakota has lost at least five farm owners, operators and skilled workers as a result of work-related accidents. A number of factors contributed to these deaths but nearly all can be avoided. Focused and coordinated educational programs are part of the solution.

Responding to farm and ranch work-related accidents is too late. Educating our agriculture community on how to prevent dangerous and perilous situations from occurring is needed. The workforce of today is less experienced and many did not grow up on farms or ranches, making the need for safety training all the more important.

In addition to safety concerns related to farm work, the increased stress level brought about by low commodity prices, trade wars and the poor farm economy has heightened the need and recognition that mental health is just as important as physical health in our rural farm communities. Farm financial stress also has accentuated the need for additional educational programming related to farm finances and economics.

**Request:** Three FTEs total. Farm safety specialist; mental health/stress specialist; off-campus farm financial specialist. \$120,000 operating support.

**Total:** \$720,000

## 3. Big Data

Large volumes of data are the norm and future for farming and ranching operations. Soil fertility tests, weather data, yield maps, genomics data, carcass data and other yet-unidentified data points are all part of the information overload that farmers and ranchers work with daily. The stark reality is that data are not useful in farm and ranch management until they are turned into meaningful information that can be used in a decision-making process.

Extension programming that helps producers gather, organize, analyze and manage data is important to future economic viability of North Dakota farms and ranches. Better data management and decision making will help farmers and ranchers conserve precious natural resources, enhance sustainability through better production decisions tailored to their farms and ranches, and ultimately lead to enhanced economic sustainability for farms, ranches and rural communities across the state.

**Request:** One FTE total. Data information specialist. Operating support, \$60,000.

**Total:** \$280,000

## 4. 4-H Youth Development

A justified need exists to escalate the opportunities 4-H provides for youth to practice and develop strong science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and entrepreneurial skills. Combined with skills such as teamwork, decision making, critical thinking and communication, STEM and entrepreneurial skills are foundational 21st century job skills. They prepare youth to be life- and job-ready.

The need and demand for these skills is greater than what we currently are able to achieve. While these skills are important in all job sectors, developing them to support North Dakota's natural resource-based economy of agriculture and energy is especially important. These areas are critical to North Dakota's current and future economic base. We need to provide youth with as many experiential learning, leadership and entrepreneurship opportunities as we can for them explore and develop workforce skills in these areas.

**Request:** Two FTEs total. One ag bioscience youth specialist. One 4-H entrepreneurship specialist. \$120,000 operating support.

**Total:** \$520,000

## 5. Operating Support

Operating support enhances the work existing staff can do by providing key resources for Extension to become more nimble in projects and programming related to needs of the state's citizens. Operating support allows specialists to develop innovative programming in a timely fashion, travel or develop new methods to connect with local communities, and leverage resources needed to address larger issues facing our citizens and communities.

**Request:** \$300,000 in operating support.

**Total:** \$300,000

## 6. Urban Ag, New Crops and New Markets

Interest in urban agriculture, particularly locally produced foods, is increasing across the state. Helping consumers connect with and understand food production is key to bridging the divide between rural and urban residents.

Opportunities are emerging for local food production in and around urban centers. These farms will be smaller and more specialized than their rural counterparts but offer opportunities for entrepreneurs who want to interface directly with consumers through local sales, farmers markets, and other wholesaling and retailing operations. The COVID-19 pandemic also has heightened consumer interest in locally produced foods, making this initiative all the more relevant.

In addition, North Dakota agricultural producers are constantly evaluating new crops and new markets. Interest in how and where food is produced is growing, and innovative producers are seeking additional market outlets. In addition, new and alternative crops such as hemp and kenza offer opportunities and alternatives to more traditional commodity crops. If these industries are to grow and thrive, additional expertise related to marketing and business development are needed.

**Request:** Two FTEs total. New and emerging enterprise specialist in business and market development. Horticulture, small farm, urban agriculture specialist. \$80,000 in operating support.

**Total:** \$480,000

## 7. Rural and Small-business Management and Entrepreneurship

Rural communities need a healthy main street to remain viable. Educational programming helps rural and small businesses compete in today's economy, and results in increased economic activity in rural areas, a stable job base and enhanced tax revenues for the state. In addition, these rural small-business owners and their employees are an important part of the social fabric of the community.

Small businesses across the state need educational programming and technical assistance related to business management and entrepreneurship. Issues surrounding these businesses include evaluating new business and market opportunities, enhancing sales through the internet and social media, intergenerational transfer, and methods to deliver products and services in a cost-effective manner.

**Request:** One FTE total. Rural business entrepreneurship specialist. \$40,000 in operating support.

**Total:** \$240,000

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