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December, 2019

SBARE

NDSU Dept. 7520
PO Box 6050
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RECEIVED

DEC 26 2019

Re: Community and Urban Agriculture Initiative

Dear SBARE Committee Members,

I am writing to encourage increased funding for the Experiment Stations (NDAES) and the NDSU Extension Service. Last week gave me an aha moment and made me want to write this letter to you. My husband and I were entertaining our Bible Study group for a holiday supper. We did not dare serve a Romaine lettuce salad or even a mixed-greens salad with the meal because of the third E. coli threat in about the past year thanks to greens grown in California or Mexico. Instead, we could turn to vegetables that had been grown and preserved locally. Along with the meal, we served Haskap Berry Wine from Dakota Sun Gardens in Carrington rather than a wine from California.

Thanks to the efforts to evaluate fruits and vegetables that are good to grow and sell in North Dakota, we have food that is delicious and safe to use.

And, that evaluation is being done by researchers at NDSU and the Experiment Stations around the state. The results of the trials are passed along to every county by the vital Extension Service staff that live there. That information in turn is used by consumers to enhance their lives and landscapes and also growers to produce food and yes, even wine.

My parents grew much of their own food, and I was part of that knowledge and connection to the land. Our children grew up with a garden, working in a garden center, and working on the landscape crew. Now, they have moved on to careers in a city, and our grandson thinks most food magically appears at the grocery store. Lucky for him, his parents also visit the Farmers Market to meet the local farmers that help keep him fed. They also value trees and shrubs in their yard which cool their house, shield them from the wind, and provide a pleasing, relaxing atmosphere away from computer screens. As future generations lose the connection between farm, home, and food production, the Experiment Stations and Extension Service are more vital than ever to maintain that Community and Urban Agriculture knowledge and education. Whether it is in helping develop healthy eating programs, researching hardy and adapted trees and shrubs, learning about the needs of our vital pollinators, planting natives for soil health and erosion control, the increased funding needs continue.

I know you have many requests for limited funding. On behalf of our many small business members located throughout the state, we urge you to please consider increasing the support for the Experiment Stations and Extension Service! Thank you very much!

Mary Holm