

**THE JOINT NDSU WILLISTON RESEARCH EXTENSION CENTER & MSU EASTERN AG RESEARCH CENTER
ADVISORY BOARD RESOLUTION REQUESTING A NEW ANIMAL RESEARCH/EXTENSION SPECIALIST
POSITION AT WREC**

WHEREAS; Soil health experiments appear to require livestock grazing and animal impact, and ruminant livestock are considered to be the missing key in the establishment of a holistic farm ecosystem.

WHEREAS; many producers specialize only in crop production with no livestock, research and education is needed to support livestock ownership and cropping production to be separate owner/operators.

WHEREAS; continuous cropping research at Williston conducted by WREC in the 1970s and '80s produced dryland corn yields ranging from near zero to in excess of 100 bushels per acre. Then, Ernie French, pioneer no-till farming researcher and past WREC director, concluded in order to grow dryland corn in Northwest North Dakota, "you need to own livestock or have a neighbor who owns livestock" to utilize the corn crop.

WHEREAS; Northwest North Dakota grasslands are in the short-grass prairie, and total annual precipitation is of a unique seasonal distribution. Livestock/crop management in Northwest North Dakota presents different challenges and strategies than in Central and Southern North Dakota.

WHEREAS; producers of both flood and overhead irrigation systems are seeking information on establishing and managing irrigated crop grazing systems.

WHEREAS; Current commodity prices are depressed. That, combined with increasing input costs and unfavorable weather conditions has led to a cost-price-squeeze for crop production in Northwest North Dakota. Winter feeding for cow calf producers offer cost-cutting opportunities, and research and educational programs supporting winter feeding strategies is needed to improve crop returns while enhancing soil health.

WHEREAS; Rangeland and pastureland are disturbed by ongoing oil field construction including construction and installation of a maze of oil/gas pipelines. Unique grazing management challenges for disturbed land and construction as well as interruption of normal seasonal growing calendars call for animal research and education.

WHEREAS; area county soil conservation districts are supporting and promoting soil health in collaboration with WREC and improved grazing management producer education is critical for current and developing management strategies.

WHEREAS; research evidence supports full season cover crops over after-harvest cover crops in cropping systems. Northwest North Dakota producers are skeptical of economic stability of full-season cover crops. Research is needed to determine best cropping systems, potential grazing strategies, and cash returns that currently lacking in our knowledge base.

WHEREAS; there is a need for a livestock specialist to educate county extension agents to provide them knowledge in their education efforts on integrated cropping systems/livestock management systems with agricultural producers.

THEREFORE; the Joint Advisory Board on Nov. 5, 2019 unanimously approved this resolution to request a 60 percent research / 40 percent animal extension specialist position at WREC.

McKenzie County Soil Conservation District
PO Box 583
Watford City, ND 58854
701-842-3628 Ext. 3

11/11/2019

North Dakota State Board of Agriculture and Reasearch
North Dakota State University
Morril Hall 314
NDSU DEPT. 7520
PO Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

Dear Members,

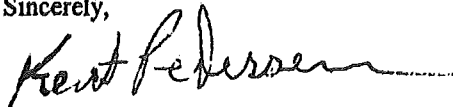
The McKenzie County Soil Conservation District strongly supports the Joint NDSU Williston Research Extension Center & MSU Eastern Ag Research Center Advisory Board's request for an Animal Research/Extension Specialist in western, North Dakota. It is imperative for western North Dakota producers to understand the impact livestock can have on the health of their soil. Being in an extremely diverse location it is crucial to have the best possible education for farmers and ranchers to become familiar with different practices to ultimately make their operation more sustainable and profitable.

Integrating livestock on cropland for soil health is the direction we want farmers and ranchers to head. Cover crops are a great tool to use for crop diversity, their added nutrients lower the input costs of fertilizer. Many cover crop mixes include turnips and radishes which create pores for added water infiltration. Cover Crops are a tremendous feed source for grazing, which means less time/money feeding. Cattle grazing is even more added nutrients to their soil when cattle are digesting the crop they are eating. An Animal Research Specialist is needed to educate cattle producers and non cattle producers on the benefit of working together so both can benefit from what one doesn't have but needs for the most productive system.

While cover crops is just an example of one tool that farmers and ranchers need to be educated on, there are several others that an Animal Research/Extension Specialist can promote to help and support area farmers and ranchers.

We greatly appreciate your time and efforts on this matter.

Sincerely,



Kent Pedersen, Chairman
McKenzie County Soil Conservation District