



**North Dakota Grain Growers Association
NDGGA Testimony to the State Board of
Research and Education
November 2, 2021
Fargo, North Dakota**

Chairwoman Lovas, members of State Board of Research and Education (SBARE), for the record my name is Dan Wogsland, Executive Director of the North Dakota Grain Growers Association (NDGGA). NDGGA, through our contracts with the North Dakota Wheat Commission and the North Dakota Barley Council, engages in domestic policy issues on the state and federal level on behalf of North Dakota wheat and barley farmers. I am providing testimony for you today on behalf of NDGGA regarding the State Board of Research and Education's priorities for the 2023 Legislative Session.

Chairwoman Lovas, members of SBARE, the past few Legislative Sessions as well as the Special Session situation that we find ourselves in now have taught us some very valuable lessons regarding how best to present North Dakota agriculture's research and extension priorities to decision-makers. NDGGA has always supported the approach of asking for everything that is needed and not to be bashful in the process. That is still the case; however, the most recent legislative action has demonstrated that stakeholders need to be laser focused on specific needs and to convey that message to Legislative leadership as well as to legislative decision-makers.

I will not forget listening to a legislative decision-maker during the waning days of the last session stating in a Committee their thought that SBARE had been disbanded. I'd not heard that around the "legislative halls" but in a new, more urbanized, North Dakota legislature, it is more important than ever that the ag community be focused and united in bringing the SBARE priorities forward in a laser focused fashion. Additionally, it is imperative that we engage with our "friends" in Bismarck so they can successfully advocate for SBARE's priorities.

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The following are some SBARE priorities that NDGGA would respectfully request that the Committee consider; some of which already exist on the SBARE priority list:

- Waldron Hall replacement; the Special Session demonstrated that confusion exists over the Waldron Hall replacement vs. the Peltier Complex facility. Certainly, we are grateful for the legislative support of the Peltier Complex which was a top priority of NDGGA. That said, it's a new day and Waldron Hall is a old/new ask which must be addressed.
- Speaking of the Peltier Complex, it needs to be an SBARE priority to adequately fund the operating costs associated with the new facility.
- Addressing the big data needs is a critical component in today's agricultural landscape; continued support to address the SBARE big data initiatives is a top priority for NDGGA.
- NDGGA appreciates the recent Appropriations Committee's support of \$8 million of capital projects for NDSU Research; nonetheless the need for capital improvements across the system is an ongoing requirement which NDGGA supports.
- NDGGA is wary of the need for additional seed cleaning facilities anywhere across the Research and Extension platform; the Association feels there are enough seed cleaning facilities both in the public and private sectors to accommodate SBARE's needs.
- Food security is an essential part of the everyday lives of North Dakotans as well as families around the world. Ag productivity is a critical component for food security. Continued funding of ag research initiatives that provide farmers and ranchers the ability to address this need is vital to their ability to feed the world.
- NDGGA would ask that SBARE continue your support of the soil health and precision agriculture programs; these initiatives are not only the future of ag it is definitely part of the present of ag.
- NDGGA would ask that SBARE continue your support of the weed science programs that address invasive species such as Palmer amaranth.
- Climate opportunities; NDSU Research and Extension can and should be an integral part of the climate smart discussions.

The following are some additional NDGGA suggested priorities:

- NDGGA would recommend adding an agronomist at the Dickinson Extension and Research Center; the recommendation would be to find someone that has a focus on production agriculture.
- NDGGA would recommend the implementation of Derik Pulvermacher's on-farm research initiative which would be a public (NDSU Research and Extension) and private (local farmers) partnership that has the potential to expand ag research capabilities in the state. Adopting such an initiative would:
 - A. Better allocate research dollars
 - B. Allow researchers to focus on more complex research
 - C. Cover more areas not traditionally covered

- D. React quicker to local needs
- E. Take advantage of more specific area research
- F. Would allow for real-world large-scale plots
- NDGGA would recommend the full funding of the Oakes Irrigation Research Site (OIRS). Legislative discussions regarding water project funding have included a renewed interest in irrigation projects in the state. Having the OIRS fully funded and operational can be pivotal in this renewed irrigation interest.

Something that is not an SBARE initiative but something that deserves the attention of SBARE as well as the ag community in the state is the need for a new feed mill at the Northern Crops Institute. The feed mill, which is used to make feed, is also used by NDSU Research to help in their research efforts. The feed mill also serves as a tool to demonstrate the use and quality of commodities grown in the area. To get the new mill funded will take the efforts of all the public/private ag stakeholders.

Finally, but most importantly, Pay your People!!! SBARE has done an excellent job of giving Research and Extension the tools to work with recognizing the job is never done. But you can have all the programs, facilities, and tools necessary yet if you don't have the people in place to accomplish your goals, we all fail. That would be to the detriment of North Dakota's number one industry. We have good people, we need more good people but to retain and attract our people we have to pay them, and pay them competitively.

Chairwoman Lovas, members of the State Board of Research and Education, we live in unprecedented times. It is crucial that all of us as ag stakeholders focus together on what is important for Ag Research and Extension in our state. North Dakota farmers and ranchers are the Best at feeding the world; NDSU Research and Extension makes that a reality.

Thank you for your time today!