



North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association

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SBARE

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Dear Members of the State Board of Agricultural Research Education,

The North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association is the sole advocate for veterinarians in North Dakota. We are reaching out to request your support for funding a full-time veterinary epidemiologist and veterinary toxicology resident at the NDSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. These specialists play an important role in safeguarding the health of North Dakota's herds and flocks and preventing significant negative economic impacts to the state's meat, milk, fiber and egg-producing industries.

Veterinary epidemiologists specialize in disease surveillance, response, and prevention. Unfortunately, North Dakota does not have a board-certified veterinary epidemiologist. By funding this position, an epidemiologist could identify interventions to prevent or minimize the effects of foreign animal diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease, African Swine Fever, and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. Additionally, a veterinary epidemiologist associated with the NDSU VDL will have access to current and past disease data, and be able to alert veterinarians, producers, and the public of any concerning disease trends.

The NDSU VDL is proud to be one of eight US veterinary laboratories with a board-certified veterinary toxicologist (i.e., Diplomate of the American Board of Veterinary Toxicology). These specialists educate veterinarians, producers/owners, and the public on toxicologic hazards in many animal species. Toxicologists are integral to herd health in cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry, and small animals. The NDSU VDL is especially known for excelling at large animal toxicology and has detected petroleum, ergot, phytoestrogens, blister beetle toxins, and mycotoxins in feed and/or animals. The veterinary toxicologist provides the interpretation needed for producers and veterinarians to properly treat and prevent toxicologic diseases.

Unfortunately, most of the diagnostic veterinary toxicologists are nearing retirement age, including the NDSU VDL toxicologist. With only three veterinary toxicology residents currently training in diagnostic settings (CA, IA, KS), this disparity of retirees and new trainees is concerning for our state. It is possible North Dakota will be without a veterinary toxicologist within the next five years if an intervention isn't started now. A proposed solution to this

problem is to provide funding for training a veterinary toxicology resident as outlined by Dr. Heidi Pecoraro from the NDSU-VDL.

We are grateful for the chance to voice our concerns about the need for more veterinary specialists such as an epidemiologist and toxicology resident in our state. The inclusion of these two professionals would ensure the necessary protection for preserving our agriculture industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Bartholomay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "B".

Brad Bartholomay, DVM
President NDVMA