

**State Board of Agricultural Research and Education**  
**January 12, 2018**  
**MINUTES**

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*The State Board of Agricultural Research and Education met for a regular meeting at the Northern Great Plains Research Lab USDA-ARS located in Mandan, ND on January 12, 2018, starting at 8:00 AM. Board members in attendance were Mike Beltz, Mark Birdsall (by Zoom videoconference), Tracy Boe, Chris Boerboom, Dean Bresciani, Ken Grafton, Lance Gulleeson, Larry Hoffmann, Jerry Klein, Brian Leier, Sarah Lovas (by Zoom videoconference), JoAnn Rodenbiker, Richard Roland, and Dean Wehri. Members Absent: Doug Goehring and Keith Peltier.*

Mr. Mike Beltz presided over the meeting at the request of Chairman Keith Peltier, who was unable to attend. Beltz called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM. He welcomed members and guests and invited everyone to make introductions.

**Administrative Update for the ND Agricultural Experiment Station (AES):**

Dr. Ken Grafton stated that AES has approved five positions for hiring this winter.

**Administrative Update for the NDSU Extension Service (EXT):**

Dr. Chris Boerboom reported there is an offer to a candidate to fill the position vacated by Dwight Aakre.

**Stakeholder Input:**

The following individuals, in order of appearance, talked about programs and initiatives important to them as part of the stakeholder and constituent input process:

4-H Build Better Citizens for the Future - Lynn Carlson  
State Soil Conservation Committee - Dennis Renner, Bruce Schmidt  
US Durum Growers' Association - Steve Perdue  
North Dakota Crop Improvement – John Schatz  
Burleigh County horticulture & FCW programs - Pat Weinberg  
Partnership in providing 'On the Move to Better Health' – Michelle Dever, Kate Gartner, from Bismarck Public Schools  
Oliver County Soil Conservation District - LeAnn Harner  
Center Community, Oliver County - Dennis Ristvedt  
Producer, Oliver Co. Fair Board, & Marketing Club - Mikael Schmidt  
Security First Bank of North Dakota, Oliver County - Sarah Getzlaff  
Oakes irrigation research site - Tom Rodine  
Energy sector and alternatives to biofuels - John Bagu, Lynn Wolf

**Business meeting and discussion**

Lance Gulleeson made a motion to approve the December 14, 2017 minutes and JoAnn Rodenbiker seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Members received informational handouts including the 2017-2019 SBARE priority lists for their reference, as well as a timeline of the overall SBARE input process. Rodenbiker inquired about the next steps. Beltz noted that all input items would be listed as line items, and then reviewed and ranked. In discussion it was noted that numerous unfunded items from the 2017-19 priority lists have resurfaced again in the current round of stakeholder requests. Deep budget cuts have reduced positions; certain types of requests may be less appealing in the next legislative session. However, critical needs have not gone away and all must be prioritized carefully.

Notable AES items frequently mentioned by stakeholders include the AgroBiome initiative and support for Precision Ag. These areas cross over multiple sectors of agriculture. AgroBiome could overlap with enhanced soil productivity, increases in specialized crops, and more. Precision Ag is a driving force in modern agriculture across many disciplines. These two areas could work closely in tandem but the scope could potentially be vast. JoAnn Rodenbiker added that these will also tie into nutrition and other human needs as well, not exclusively agriculture. Members encouraged Grafton to discuss with the departments where might be the optimal focus areas to start considering, going forward.

Highlights of the Extension support included strong advocacy for the county extension presence, leadership initiatives such as Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND), the Mobile Pesticide Application Lab (MPAL), and livestock specialists. The 2015 input process brought forward the 'Enhancing Extension Infrastructure' initiative, along with a focus on farm safety, and both of these remain clear concerns for stakeholders. Boerboom noted some Extension programs are FTE-driven and may discontinue due to being unable to hire specialists to conduct them.

Capital needs discussed included buildings, deferred maintenance, equipment and related storage space, land base shortages and facility needs related to livestock, feedlots, and seed storage capacity. NDSU campus department representatives brought up Harris Hall and Waldron Hall issues. Stakeholders have resubmitted several unmet needs from 2017. An alphabetized list will be developed and sent for the board's consideration.

Board members noted that both tactical and strategic considerations must be taken into account. The research and outreach considerations require a unique approach compared to that of private sector entities; the immense diversity of agriculture in North Dakota means a wide scope of opportunities to consider.

Members discussed a deadline for taking input and set January 31, 2018 as the final cutoff date.

### **Extension Review Discussion:**

Input has clearly shown that there is strong support for treating all counties the same in terms of the new base policy agreement between the counties and Extension. The County Commissioners organization indicated a preference for a simple plan regarding the cost-share split; the new plan would include all expenses for the agent including fringe. Boerboom stated the item contained in C4 of the Draft SBARE Review report should now be changed if this is the recommendation. Discussion followed on the timing of instating a new agreement and the related impact on counties' budgeting schedules. At the earliest, the change would likely be initiated as of January 2019; county fiscal year schedules differ from state fiscal year schedules. A member asked how an adjusted cost-share split would affect the Extension budget going forward. Boerboom replied that any Extension funds freed up in the new budget arrangement would be redirected to fill some of the highest priority vacancies.

Senator Jerry Klein made a motion that the SBARE support all counties being treated the same with regard to the Extension Agent position funding split, seconded by Dean Wehri. Discussion followed on various percentage breakdowns that were discussed in Extension review meetings, but members came to the consensus that it did not fall within their purview as a board to specify cost-share percentages. As has been done historically, the new base policy agreement will be negotiated within the existing partnership between Extension and the ND County Commissioners Association. Merger ideas will not be part of any main recommendations at this time; counties should be free to pursue efficiencies where prudent. Birdsall called for a point of order regarding the motion on the floor. Beltz called for a vote and the motion carried.

Wehri felt that despite being an uncomfortable process at times, this was a worthwhile endeavor. It is hoped that stakeholders will carry forward their strong support for Extension in North Dakota into the next legislative session. SBARE members thanked Boerboom for his extensive work throughout the Review process, and asked him to proceed with negotiations with the counties on the new base policy.

Discussion followed regarding several details in the wording of the draft recommendation document. Mark Birdsall made a motion to remove the phrase from the Phase 1 recommendation, section C4, "but it may not mean an agent is located in each county," and the motion was seconded by Senator Klein. Motion carried.

Board members agreed adjustments should be made to the verbiage regarding 4-H programs, to allow more freedom for counties to identify efficiencies and decide how local programming shall be conducted.

Beltz was Chair of the Extension Review committee and requested that the final writing committee include him and committee members Peltier, Birdsall, and Dr. Greg Lardy. The SBARE chair must present this report at the March 21 Budget Section meeting. After further discussion, SBARE members urged the writing committee to obtain and include additional informational details in the report to illustrate key points with facts and details from Extension. This could include funding, staffing, program areas, effort reporting, and mission; inclusion of these items where needed would serve to give context to various items that are being addressed. It was also urged that the draft be shared with Jace Beehler from the Governor's office, as he was a partner in the Phase 2 review process.

Beltz called for members to share any final thoughts on the Extension Review process. Klein urged fairness in the treatment of counties; Gullekson shared concern for Sargent County's budget challenges going forward if there is a new cost-share split in the future. Beltz hoped that representatives from county associations might attend more legislative sessions in the future for additional support. Hoffmann supports the recommendations going forward. Birdsall thanked the review committee for their diligence; the process reassured him of Extension's importance in North Dakota. Lovas

thanked the committee, noting that Extension has been a big part of her entire life. She has learned more in this process and appreciates the intent of leaving more freedom for counties to determine their own path regarding Extension.

Following submission of the report, the contents will serve as a launching pad for in-depth discussions with counties going forward. Representative Boe pointed out that the report will become part of official state records, and the data contained within will be available to those who would need it if the same questions arise in future discussions.

Beltz expressed his thanks to Extension for all their hard work throughout the Review Process. The intent has always been to seek improvements and make things better.

Beltz adjourned the meeting at 1:44 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Lorie Herbel.*