



2025

NDSU AGRICULTURE

Faculty and Staff Awards

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2025

3 P.M. CST

Oceti Sakowin Ballroom
NDSU Memorial Union

NDSU

VICE PRESIDENT FOR
NDSU AGRICULTURE



Larson/Yaggie Excellence in Research Award

This annual award, established by the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, recognizes outstanding faculty and Research Extension Center principal investigators with 10 or fewer years of service (2000 job band). The recipient must have made a significant research contribution that addresses an applied problem or increases the basic knowledge of the area investigated.

■ SAMIRAN BANERJEE

Assistant Professor
Department of Microbiological Sciences

"Dr. Banerjee is a leading voice in microbial ecology, recognized not just for his scientific achievements, but for his passion for education, collaboration and real-world impact."

Samiran Banerjee joined NDSU in 2020 as an assistant professor.

His research program has made transformative contributions to microbial ecology, soil health and sustainable agriculture, establishing a global reputation for both scientific innovation and societal relevance. The program aims to uncover the ecological rules that govern microbiome structure and function using amplicon sequencing, metagenomics, high-throughput culturing and advanced statistical approaches such as network analysis, spatial modeling and machine learning.

For the past two years, Banerjee has been named to the Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers List for microbiology, recognizing him as one of the world's most influential scientists whose publications rank in the top 1% by citations worldwide.

He has secured over \$5.7 million in extramural funding, authored or co-authored 49 peer-reviewed journal articles and given 68 presentations in the last five years.

Banerjee holds a Ph.D. from the University of Saskatchewan, two master's degrees from the University of Aberdeen and Vidyasagar University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Calcutta.

■ SULAYMON ESHKABILOV

Assistant Professor
Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering

"Dr. Eshkabilov's research has elevated NDSU's leadership in precision agriculture, apiculture technology and agricultural automation. His work has significantly strengthened the region's agricultural sustainability and innovation capacity."

Sulaymon Eshkabilov joined NDSU in 2021 as an assistant professor.

His research areas are at the intersection of sensing technologies, agricultural robotics and data science, with a focus on developing intelligent systems for precision agriculture.

Eshkabilov is an inspiring mentor and visionary researcher, widely respected for motivating students, initiating innovative programs and building productive interdisciplinary collaborations. He collaborates with over 40 researchers across eight departments and three colleges at NDSU, as well as with partners from universities and USDA-ARS sites nationwide.

In the last five years, he has secured over \$7.8 million in extramural funding and has authored or co-authored 28 peer-reviewed journal articles and given 22 presentations.

Eshkabilov earned his Ph.D. from the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan and his master's degrees from the Rochester Institute of Technology and the Tashkent Automobile and Road Institute.

■ UPINDER GILL

Assistant Professor
Department of Plant Pathology

"Dr. Gill has demonstrated exceptional research productivity, making significant contributions to both fundamental science and applied research in his field."

Upinder Gill joined NDSU in 2019 as an assistant professor.

He has carved out a distinctive niche in his primary research area, which is focused on identifying host resistance genes and pathogen effectors to decipher their molecular interactions.

In applied research, Gill establishes annual rust screening nurseries for hard red spring wheat and durum at multiple field locations across North Dakota. His fundamental research is directed towards finding new sources of rust resistance, understanding the mechanisms of resistance and deploying resistance into crop plants.

His former students and postdoctoral researchers are now serving in academic and industry roles, reflecting his commitment to mentoring future scientific leaders.

Since 2020, Gill has authored or co-authored 29 peer-reviewed journal articles and given 55 presentations. He has also secured over \$2.8 million in extramural funding.

Gill earned his Ph.D. from Washington State University and his master's and bachelor's degrees from Punjab Agricultural University.

Larson/Yaggie Excellence in Research Award (continued)

■ TRAVIS SEABORN

Assistant Professor
School of Natural Resource Sciences

"Dr. Seaborn's research significantly enhances our understanding of ecological systems with direct applications for North Dakota stakeholders."

Travis Seaborn joined NDSU in 2022 as an assistant professor.

He is an applied ecologist who combines approaches from fields such as landscape ecology, movement ecology, conservation genomics and computational biology to investigate the processes and patterns of how species respond to environmental change and management actions. He studies how changes in the surrounding landscape, such as agriculture, dams, deforestation or urbanization, affect the health, diversity and persistence of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

Seaborn's research enhances understanding of ecological systems with direct applications for North Dakotans. For example, his innovative work on how plant and food diversity impact gut biomes and bumble bee population genetics provides actionable insights for pollinator conservation.

In the last five years, Seaborn has authored or co-authored 19 peer-reviewed journal articles, as well as five other publications. In that same time, he has successfully secured \$6.5 million in research funding and has given 10 presentations.

Seaborn holds a Ph.D. from Washington State University, a master's degree from Western Carolina University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Washington.

■ SANDRO STEINBACH

Associate Professor and Director for
Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies
Department of Agribusiness and
Applied Economics

"Through his leadership, mentorship and record of innovation, along with policy-relevant research, Dr. Steinbach advances the frontiers of agricultural economics while contributing solutions that promote stability and sustainability in the global agri-food system."

Sandro Steinbach joined NDSU in 2022 as an associate professor.

His research focuses on international trade, agricultural policy and agribusiness, addressing global trade disruptions, food security and climate-related challenges. His work on trade policies, market structures and policy shocks provides critical insights into global trade dynamics and their impact on agriculture.

Steinbach's research on climate disruptions and supply chain vulnerabilities informs policy decisions and supports economic resilience in agriculture. His interdisciplinary approach and use of advanced econometric models and AI have significantly influenced regional and international agricultural policies.

Steinbach has secured over \$18.2 million in extramural funding and published 48 peer-reviewed journal articles in the last five years. He has delivered 66 presentations and authored 49 other publications.

Steinbach earned his Ph.D. from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, a master's degree from the University of California, Davis, and master's and bachelor's degrees from Humboldt University of Berlin.

■ MINWEI XU

Assistant Professor
Department of Plant Sciences

"Dr. Xu exemplifies the innovative and collaborative spirit that defines NDSU's research mission; his integration of digital modeling, green processing and functional food design positions him as an emerging leader in sustainable food systems and digital agriculture."

Minwei Xu joined NDSU in 2021 as an assistant professor.

His research focuses on advancing sustainable food processing technologies through integration of protein modification, extrusion, 3D printing and hyperspectral imaging, coupled with machine learning. His program bridges material science, food chemistry and digital agriculture to transform plant-based and byproduct-derived ingredients into high-value functional foods.

Xu's research directly supports North Dakota's agricultural and food industries by converting regional crops and byproducts into higher-value food ingredients and functional materials.

In the last five years, he has authored or co-authored 27 peer-reviewed journal articles, 11 abstracts and meeting proceedings and three book chapters. In that same time, he has given 13 presentations and has helped secure nearly \$4 million in grant funding.

Xu holds a Ph.D. from NDSU, a master's degree from Jiangnan University and a bachelor's degree from the Tianjin University of Technology.



Eugene R. Dahl Excellence in Research Award

This annual award, established by the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, recognizes outstanding faculty and Research Extension Center principal investigators in their 11th year or more of service (2000 job band). The recipient must have a distinguished research program in basic or applied sciences that has gained significant recognition in the state, region or nation and/or internationally.

■ CARL DAHLEN

Professor
Department of Animal Sciences

"Dr. Dahlen's visionary approach to multigenerational experiments and the knowledge gained from his research has advanced management practices and provides important insights for improving performance in beef cattle."

Carl Dahlen joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2010, became an associate professor in 2016 and was promoted to professor in 2023.

His research focuses on improving fertility in livestock species and evaluating how nutrition and management strategies affect reproductive performance and offspring outcomes. Dahlen has developed novel research techniques and training methodologies that significantly impact both applied and basic research efforts. His work includes optimizing assisted reproductive techniques for cattle and sheep, as well as evaluating the effects of maternal and paternal nutrition on offspring.

Dahlen's research has a direct impact on state and regional agriculture, enhancing producer profitability through improved reproductive and management strategies.

He has authored or co-authored 146 peer-reviewed journal articles, 324 abstracts and meeting proceedings and four book chapters. He has also made numerous presentations at regional, national and international levels and helped secure over \$5 million in grants.

Dahlen holds his Ph.D., and a master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of Minnesota.

■ J. PAULO FLORES

Assistant Professor
Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering

"Dr. Flores is an exemplary researcher whose innovative work in high-throughput phenotyping has significantly advanced crop improvement and positioned NDSU as a leader in pulse crop research."

Paulo Flores joined NDSU in 2014 as a nutrient management specialist and became an assistant professor in 2019.

His research program has focused mainly on the applications of sensors and the development of tools to implement high-throughput phenotyping for plant breeding and site-specific weed control. He works closely with plant breeders to collect data from their research plots using drones and other platforms and to develop image analysis solutions that improve efficiency in their breeding programs.

Flores and his team have been working with several NDSU breeding programs to develop tools that automate the analysis of drone imagery and extract information regarding traits of interest. These innovations have reduced the time required to perform certain drone image analysis tasks from hours to just a few minutes or even seconds.

In the last five years, Flores has authored or co-authored 22 journal articles, 26 abstracts or meeting proceedings and four book chapters. He has made 13 presentations and has secured over \$6.6 million in grant funding.

Flores holds a Ph.D. and a master's degree from Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul and a bachelor's degree from Federal University of Santa Maria.

■ BRIAN JENKS

Agricultural Experiment Station
Specialist and Weed Scientist
North Central Research Extension Center

"Dr. Jenks prioritizes the needs and wants of North Dakota farmers and ranchers, and has demonstrated a strong commitment to practical, real-world solutions in weed science."

Brian Jenks joined NDSU as an assistant Agricultural Experiment Station specialist and weed scientist in 1997 and was promoted to specialist in 2020.

He is responsible for developing and implementing an integrated weed management program in north-central North Dakota, focusing on key weed management problems in various crops, including canola, mustard, small grains and more.

Jenks's work is distinguished by its practical application and scientific rigor. He has played a crucial role in securing emergency chemical labels for new crops and expanding chemical options for minor crops. His efforts in identifying and controlling invasive species such as Palmer amaranth have been vital in protecting the region's crops. His dedication is evident in his personal handling of grower calls and his willingness to assist at the North Central Research Extension Center office.

Jenks has authored or co-authored five peer-reviewed journal articles and 120 abstracts and meeting proceedings. He has made 675 presentations and helped secure \$5 million in grant funding.

Jenks earned his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and his master's and bachelor's degrees from Utah State University.

Eugene R. Dahl Excellence in Research Award (continued)

■ JULIE PASCHE

Professor and Neil C. Gudmestad
Endowed Chair of Potato Pathology
Department of Plant Pathology

“Dr. Pasche is a well-known and well-respected potato pathologist recognized worldwide for significant contributions to the diagnosis of devastating potato disease problems, investigating fungicide resistance and providing effective disease management strategies.”

Julie Pasche joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2012. She was promoted to associate professor in 2019 and was named the Neil C. Gudmestad Endowed Chair of Potato Pathology in that same year. In 2025, she advanced to professor.

Her research focuses on managing soil-borne pathogens affecting potatoes, including *Alternaria solani*, which causes early blight. Pasche’s team works on identifying fungicide insensitivity and assessing fungal diversity to develop new management strategies, including genetic resistance.

Pasche has led significant initiatives, such as the “black dot initiative,” addressing a major disease affecting potato growers. Her team has developed molecular diagnostic assays for various soil-borne pathogens, aiming to make these tools commercially available to growers. Her research has garnered substantial funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other sources, supporting projects that directly benefit the potato industry.

Pasche has authored or co-authored 82 peer-reviewed journal articles, 161 abstracts and meeting proceedings, and five book chapters. She has also made 101 presentations and helped secure over \$17.4 million in grant funding.

Pasche earned her Ph.D., and a master’s and bachelor’s degrees from NDSU.

■ DEIRDRE PRISCHMANN-VOLDSETH

Professor
School of Natural Resource Sciences

“Dr. Prischmann-Voldseth is constantly incorporating new techniques, exploring cutting-edge ideas and developing novel collaborations that expand the reach of her research program and lead to important insights into complex insect-plant interactions.”

Deirdre Prischmann-Voldseth joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2008, became an associate professor in 2015 and was promoted to professor in 2021.

Her research primarily centers on the integrated pest management (IPM) of insects that attack crop plants important to North Dakota and the utility of two IPM tactics: host plant resistance and biological control. Unlike faculty who have a narrow focus, Prischmann-Voldseth’s research spans a diversity of crops and IPM topics.

Soybean insect pest management has been a focal area since she started at NDSU, and she’s been invited many times to be a co-PI on multistate grants and collaborate with federal and university scientists and industry professionals across the Midwest.

Additionally, she participates in multistate research endeavors in which scientists from various institutions collaborate to address pest problems that impact producers.

Prischmann-Voldseth has authored or co-authored 62 peer-reviewed journal articles, given 155 presentations and secured over \$16.8 million in grant funding.

Prischmann-Voldseth earned her Ph.D. at Washington State University, and a master’s degree at Oregon State University and a bachelor’s degree at Alfred University.

■ MD MUKHLESUR RAHMAN

Professor
Department of Plant Sciences

“Dr. Rahman is unquestionably recognized regionally, nationally and internationally for his contributions to oilseed crops.”

Md Mukhlesur Rahman joined NDSU as a canola breeder in 2008 and became an assistant professor in 2012. He was promoted to associate professor in 2019 and advanced to professor in 2025.

With 31 years of experience in teaching, research and extension, Rahman focuses on plant breeding, genetics and genomics. His research incorporates modern methodologies such as UAV and robotic technologies for high-throughput crop phenotyping. He has developed several high-yielding canola and flax cultivars and is working on enhancing genetic diversity and stress tolerance in these crops.

Rahman’s collaborative efforts with institutions such as the University of California, Los Angeles and various agricultural companies have been crucial for advancing his research. He frequently presents his findings at international conferences and field days, maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders.

Rahman has helped secure over \$5.4 million in competitive grants and has supervised numerous graduate students and research specialists. He has published 61 peer-reviewed articles, two book chapters and 109 abstracts.

Rahman holds a Ph.D. from the University of Manitoba and two master’s degrees from the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology and Bangladesh Agricultural University.

Eugene R. Dahl Excellence in Research Award (continued)

■ SHEELA RAMAMOORTHY

Professor
Department of Microbiological Sciences

"Dr. Ramamoorthy's ability to excel as an original-thinking theoretician, critical experimentalist and tool-builder is rarely, if ever, found in the same person."

Sheela Ramamoorthy joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2012, became an associate professor in 2017 and was promoted to professor in 2022.

Ramamoorthy is a nationally and internationally recognized expert in veterinary infectious diseases and vaccinology. The primary focus of her research is the study of viruses that affect farm animals and their prevention through vaccination.

Her wide-ranging impacts extend beyond animal agriculture to the disciplines of virology, immunology, and education and training in infectious diseases, as well as the promotion of vaccinology as a discipline through the professional leadership positions she has occupied.

During her tenure as a veterinary diagnostic virologist, Ramamoorthy has developed groundbreaking diagnostic tests that are now routinely used in laboratories across the U.S.

She has authored or co-authored 58 peer-reviewed journal articles, 117 abstracts and meeting proceedings, three book chapters and eight other publications. She has given 133 presentations and has secured over \$6.6 million in grant funding.

Ramamoorthy earned her Ph.D. from Virginia Tech, her master's degree from Oklahoma State University and her Bachelor of Veterinary Science (DVM) from Madras Veterinary College.

■ CHERYL WACHENHEIM

Professor
Department of Agribusiness and
Applied Economics

"Dr. Wachenheim's lifelong passion is teaching. She wants all her students and colleagues to succeed and is willing to do everything she can to help them find and live out their dreams."

Cheryl Wachenheim joined NDSU in 1998 as an assistant professor, was promoted to associate professor in 2003 and advanced to professor in 2010.

Wachenheim keeps her courses up-to-date and ensures they are both rigorous and relevant, facilitating students' readiness for their future careers or continued education.

Wachenheim believes her most important responsibility in enhancing the student experience and fostering intellectual and personal growth is to know her students. To ensure course activities prepare them for academic and career success while also supporting their personal goals, she takes the time to understand what those goals are.

Wachenheim has authored or co-authored 65 peer-reviewed journal articles and 99 abstracts and meeting proceedings. She has given 240 presentations and secured over \$2 million in grant funding.

Wachenheim holds a Ph.D. and master's degree from Michigan State University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota.



Earl and Dorothy Foster Excellence in Teaching Award

This annual award recognizes outstanding teaching faculty with 10 or fewer years of service in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources. The award encourages and rewards excellence in teaching at all levels and among all disciplines.

■ EWUMBUA MONONO

Assistant Professor
Department of Agricultural and
Biosystems Engineering

"Dr. Monono is not only an excellent classroom teacher but also a great mentor to students who work with him in the lab. He especially engages with undergraduate students interested in bioprocess engineering."

Ewumbua Monono joined NDSU as a research specialist in 2015 and became an assistant professor in 2020.

Monono enhances student learning by incorporating hands-on activities in ABEN 458/658 and ABEN 750, such as a spray dryer lab and a distillation column project, which help students apply theoretical concepts to real-life scenarios. His innovative teaching methods engage students through in-class activities and relatable examples, earning praise from peers and students alike. He ensures fairness and clarity in evaluation, with consistent feedback and a well-defined grading rubric which have contributed to strong student ratings.

In response to the pandemic, Monono adapted his teaching to a HyFlex model that allowed for hands-on lab experiences, which students appreciated over recorded sessions. He also collaborates with colleagues to ensure skill development continuity between courses.

His contributions to teaching were recognized with the 2023 College of Engineering Early Career Excellence in Teaching Award.

Monono earned his Ph.D. and master's degree from NDSU and his agricultural engineering diploma from the University of Dschang, Cameroon.

■ JIAJIA RAO

Associate Professor
Department of Plant Sciences

"Dr. Rao's passion for her subject matter is infectious, which has inspired students to delve deeper and think critically, while making complex topics accessible and engaging."

Jiajia Rao joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2016 and was promoted to associate professor in 2022.

Rao exemplifies teaching excellence through her innovative and inclusive methods in food and cereal science courses. She offers a diverse range of courses, including the capstone Food Product Development course and newly developed classes such as Food Ingredient Technology. Rao's dedication to enhancing student learning is evident in her effective use of both traditional and hybrid teaching tools, particularly during the pandemic, when she ensured continuity of learning through Zoom and Blackboard. Her teaching consistently receives high evaluations from students.

Rao fosters intellectual growth by integrating real-world problem-solving, case studies and group projects that equip students with critical skills around creativity, communication and collaboration. She also emphasizes inclusive learning by providing tailored instruction for graduate students and hands-on lab experiences. Her commitment to professional development, collaboration with industry and innovative teaching methods significantly enhances the educational experience and student employability in the food science field.

Rao earned her Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, her master's degree from Chongqing University, China, and her bachelor's degree from Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, China.



H. Roald and Janet Lund Excellence in Teaching Award

This annual award recognizes outstanding teaching faculty in their 11th year or more of service in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources. The award encourages and rewards excellence in teaching at all levels and among all disciplines.

■ EDWARD (SHAWN) DEKEYSER

Professor
School of Natural Resource Sciences

"Dr. DeKeyser has the rare talent of understanding how to not only push students to realize the full potential of their knowledge but also how to support and encourage students to gain confidence within their own minds."

Shawn DeKeyser joined NDSU as a research specialist and lecturer in 2000. He became an assistant professor in 2007, was promoted to associate professor in 2011 and advanced to professor in 2017. He also serves as curator of the NDSU Herbarium. His leadership has been integral to the success of the Natural Resources Management (NRM) interdisciplinary academic program and the Master of Natural Resource Management (MNRM) program.

Applying theories learned in class to real-world application is important to DeKeyser. He has developed three courses stemming from real-world experience with current research, job markets and ecological issues.

DeKeyser is involved in curriculum development and integration of the NRM major with other programs. He has helped develop major learning outcomes that reach across all programs of the School of Natural Resource Sciences. His students say he is passionate about his work and always open to questions and new ideas.

DeKeyser holds a Ph.D. and master's degree from NDSU and a bachelor's degree from Jamestown College.

■ GLENN DORSAM

Professor
Department of Microbiological Sciences

"Dr. Dorsam demonstrates both innovation and a strong commitment to student success. He sets high expectations and works closely with students to help them meet and exceed those standards."

Glenn Dorsam joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2004, became an associate professor in 2013 and was promoted to professor in 2024.

He demonstrates a deep command of immunology and research ethics, translating his knowledge into courses that are both rigorous and continually updated.

Dorsam created the graduate course Scientific Integrity and secured its permanent approval, curating contemporary cases of misconduct and ethical dilemmas and inviting cross-disciplinary scientists into class so students confront real, current scenarios that researchers face.

He is known for drawing out systems for his students, illustrating pathways in a spatial format instead of relying on descriptions or static pictures. He demonstrates where things connect and how there may be interplay between various pathways. He also values student feedback about his courses and teaching methods.

Dorsam earned his Ph.D. from Virginia Commonwealth University and his bachelor's degree from Michigan State University.

■ SIEW HOON LIM

Professor
Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics

"Dr. Lim's support of and belief in her students fosters a deep sense of trust and connection. They know she believes in their abilities, even when they might doubt themselves."

Siew Hoon Lim joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2005, was promoted to associate professor in 2015 and advanced to professor in 2021.

Lim's teaching portfolio is extensive with a range of courses that include ECON 201 Principles of Microeconomics, AGECE 378 Intro to Transportation and Logistics, ECON 410/610 Econometrics, ECON 480/680 Industrial Organization and AGECE 739 Analytical Methods in Applied Economics.

She champions higher-order thinking and learning through her course assignments. Recognizing the value of connecting classroom knowledge to real-world scenarios and fostering effective communication skills, she incorporates research projects that culminate in both a written paper and an oral presentation.

Lim's commitment to staying at the forefront of her field is evident in her continuous efforts to update and revise course materials. She embraces innovative teaching methods, incorporating multimedia learning tools and partially flipped classroom models that empower students to take ownership of their learning progress.

Helping students learn is her highest priority. She is deeply committed to their academic success and believes that genuine care for students is a cornerstone of effective teaching.

Lim earned her Ph.D. from the University of Georgia and her bachelor's degree from Bemidji State University.

H. Roald and Janet Lund Excellence in Teaching Award (continued)

■ STACEY OSTBY

Senior Lecturer
Department of Animal Sciences

"Stacey Ostby doesn't just teach veterinary medicine; she inspires students to explore every opportunity and believe they can achieve more than they thought possible."

Stacey Ostby joined NDSU as a lecturer in 2009. She became a co-director of the Veterinary Technology program in 2012 and was promoted to senior lecturer in 2021.

Ostby has demonstrated mastery in a plethora of courses during her 16 years of teaching and learning alongside her students. Her instructional foundation is strengthened by seven years of experience as a practicing veterinary technologist, which she draws upon when developing and delivering course content.

Ostby serves as the primary instructor for the introductory Veterinary Nursing courses, of which requires a high level of skill, knowledge and patience. With her guidance, students transform from novice animal handlers into confident providers of veterinary medical care for both small and large animal patients.

Through her contributions to textbooks, presentations at national conferences, and leadership in accreditation and curriculum design, Ostby exemplifies scholarly engagement in teaching.

Ostby earned her master's and bachelor's degrees from NDSU.



William J. and Angelyn A. Austin Excellence in Advising Award

This annual award recognizes the contributions of faculty and staff who have demonstrated excellence in advising undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources and/or its student organizations.

■ THOMAS BALDWIN

Assistant Professor
Department of Plant Pathology

"Dr. Baldwin cultivates a community of curiosity, compassion and excellence. He empowers every student to grow as both a scientist and a person."

Thomas Baldwin joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2021.

Baldwin's advising philosophy is grounded in empathy, curiosity and student empowerment. As a mentor to several Ph.D. students and multiple master's and undergraduate researchers, he invests deeply in each student's development.

He develops individualized mentorship plans for each mentee, tailored to their strengths, challenges and career aspirations. His open-door policy ensures students can access support at any time, whether they are troubleshooting experiments, refining manuscripts or navigating personal obstacles.

Baldwin encourages professional growth by organizing writing retreats, mock prelims and career planning sessions. Additionally, he helps students build connections with industry, government and academic partners. He uses NDSU resources strategically, connecting students with CCAST computing training, grant-writing opportunities and professional networks to strengthen their academic and career trajectories.

Through trust, encouragement and consistent feedback, Baldwin fosters confidence and independence. His approach strengthens student well-being, critical thinking and leadership and prepares them to succeed as scientists and citizens.

Baldwin holds a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia and a B.S. degree from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

■ BARNEY GEDDES

Assistant Professor, Richard and Linda Offerdahl Faculty Fellow
Department of Microbiological Sciences

"Dr. Geddes is a dedicated mentor whose hands-on guidance, passion for science, unwavering support and genuine care have shaped the success of countless students within and beyond his lab."

Barney Geddes joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2020 and was named the inaugural Richard and Linda Offerdahl Faculty Fellow in 2023.

Geddes's advising philosophy is centered on personal connection, individualized guidance and empowering students to grow into independent scientists. He has mentored postdoctoral fellows, Ph.D. and master's students and many undergraduate and high school researchers where each student receives tailored support that reflects their goals, strengths and motivations.

He maintains consistent communication through biweekly one-on-one meetings, weekly lab meetings and informal daily check-ins, fostering transparency and trust. Geddes encourages students to lead experiments, present findings, write manuscripts and collaborate on grant proposals. His mentorship style builds both scientific excellence and confidence.

Geddes creates a warm and inclusive lab culture built on respect, collaboration and belonging, supported by a detailed lab handbook and community-building traditions such as group meals and social events.

He also connects students with institutional and professional resources, including the Center for Writers, the Career and Advising Center and national and international collaborators. He encourages participation in conferences, competitions and networking opportunities to strengthen career readiness and visibility.

Geddes earned his Ph.D. and Honours Bachelor of Science from the University of Manitoba.

William J. and Angelyn A. Austin Excellence in Advising Award (continued)

■ LAUREN HANNA

Associate Professor
Department of Animal Sciences

"Dr. Hanna's academic advising reflects honesty, transparency and genuine respect — creating relationships students value."

Lauren Hanna joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2013 and was promoted to associate professor in 2020.

Hanna believes effective advising begins with trust and respect. She has developed advising documents and tools that help guide meaningful conversations and keeps these resources updated to maintain accuracy. She encourages each advisee to meet at least once per semester and prepares for those meetings by reviewing degree progress and notes in advance. Her goal is to help students set realistic goals and evaluate options, whether that means adjusting coursework or pursuing professional programs. She uses Bison Advise scheduling to make connecting easier and to encourage more frequent interactions.

Hanna also guides students in using campus resources and solving problems. She helped create the department's first advising guidelines document and serves as a sounding board for unique academic or personal situations, guiding students in building confidence and independence.

Hanna earned her Ph.D. and a master's and bachelor's degrees from Texas A&M University.

■ THOMAS KRUMEL

Assistant Professor
Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics

"Dr. Krumel inspires students to discover their strengths and take ownership of their learning, demonstrating the profound difference mentorship can make in shaping futures."

Thomas Krumel joined NDSU as an assistant professor in 2021.

Krumel is known for fostering strong, personal relationships with students and guiding their intellectual and professional growth. Maintaining the largest advisee list in his department, he helps students navigate academic and career decisions, access university and community resources and pursue opportunities that align with their goals.

He co-developed the Barley to Brewery study abroad program, advises the Agribusiness and Applied Economics Graduate Club, and has guided dozens of students through the department's 4+1 master's program. Through collaboration with the National Needs Fellowship program, he has expanded opportunities for women pursuing graduate study in agricultural and applied economics. His mentorship blends rigorous academic guidance with steady encouragement, empowering students to realize their potential and succeed in complex, real-world contexts.

Krumel earned his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut, master's degrees from the University of Akron and the University of Minnesota, and bachelor's degree from Mount Union College.

■ XIN (REX) SUN

Associate Professor and Endowed Chair and Director of the Peltier Institute
Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering

"Dr. Sun inspires students to explore innovative solutions in agriculture while cultivating the skills and confidence to succeed in their careers."

Rex Sun joined NDSU in 2015 as a visiting scholar and postdoctoral researcher, becoming a research scientist that same year. In 2018, he was appointed adjunct faculty and later transitioned to assistant professor, before being promoted to associate professor in 2023. In 2025, he was named Endowed Chair and Director of the Peltier Institute. He also serves as director of the NDSU Meat Quality Laboratory Recharge Center, associate director of the Center for Digital Agriculture and Big Data and faculty fellow.

An exceptional mentor and advisor, Sun nurtures close relationships with students, combining academic guidance with career and personal support. He actively monitors students' well-being, encourages resilience through challenges and helps them navigate institutional resources, internships and research opportunities.

Under his guidance, undergraduate students from his precision agriculture courses have achieved 100% employment. Many have launched businesses, presented at national conferences or advanced to graduate programs and faculty positions across the U.S. and internationally. Sun's mentorship emphasizes independence, critical thinking and professional development, preparing students for leadership roles in agriculture and technology.

Sun holds a Ph.D. from Nanjing Agricultural University, China, and a bachelor's degree from Yantai University, China.



Excellence in Extension Early Career Award

NDSU Extension established this annual award to encourage and reward significant accomplishments and excellence in Extension educational programs. Individuals with 10 or fewer years of cumulative service to NDSU Extension are eligible for nomination. Nominees must hold an Extension appointment and be in the 2000 job band. Nominations are inclusive to county agents and specialists in the NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources.

■ CLAIR KEENE

Assistant Professor and
Extension Agronomist
Department of Plant Sciences

"Dr. Keene combines research-based agronomy with practical, producer-focused outreach, helping North Dakota farmers make confident, data-driven decisions."

Clair Keene joined NDSU in 2016 as the Extension specialist in cropping systems and became an assistant professor in 2021.

Keene serves as the Extension small-grain and corn agronomist for NDSU, where she provides statewide leadership in cereal crop production education. Keene began her Extension career in western North Dakota as an area specialist and now serves as a state specialist in Fargo. Over nine years, she has built respected statewide programming that delivers timely, science-based information to farmers, agronomists, commodity groups and ag industry partners.

Keene leads key programs — including the Best of the Best in Wheat Production meetings and the annual variety trial publication series for wheat, barley, rye, oats and corn — that directly support producer profitability through informed variety selection and crop management. She collaborates closely with Research Extension Center agronomists, plant breeders, NDSU campus specialists, Extension county agents and national networks to expand access to emerging research. Her outreach spans in-person meetings, webinars, field days, media interviews and one-on-one producer consultations.

Keene also brings innovation through partnership-based programming, including soil health field days, organic agronomy training efforts, integrated weed management initiatives and leadership in perennial grain research with Kernza. Her work strengthens the connection between NDSU research and real-world farm decisions, reaching thousands each year.

Keene earned her Ph.D. from Penn State and bachelor's degrees from Iowa State University.

■ DON KINZLER

Extension Agent, Agriculture and
Natural Resources
Cass County

"Through creativity, connection and can-do practicality, Don Kinzler empowers North Dakotans to grow with confidence while enriching their lives and communities."

Don Kinzler first served with NDSU Extension from 1980 to 1984. He returned in 2019 to serve as the Extension horticulture agent in Cass County, where he provides education and outreach to both urban and rural audiences across the Fargo metro region and beyond.

Kinzler is recognized statewide for his innovative approach to teaching and his ability to make research-based horticulture information accessible and usable for the general public.

Kinzler builds program priorities by staying closely connected to the people he serves through daily conversations, community relationships and years of technical experience as a greenhouse owner. He uses multiple communication platforms, including weekly call-in radio shows on four stations reaching more than 5.7 million listeners, televised interviews, regular newspaper columns, a gardening podcast and digital content. His media presence also drives participation in Extension workshops and events, expanding Extension's reach to thousands of gardeners each year.

Kinzler's programming is grounded in teamwork and volunteer engagement. He oversees 155 Master Gardeners in Cass County, whose more than 4,800 volunteer hours annually support hands-on education and community service. Flagship efforts such as "GardenPalooza" and "Veggies for the Pantry" foster learning, address food insecurity and build community connections. Kinzler also supports 4-H through horticulture education and provides experiential learning environments such as the "Living Ag in the Classroom" potato exhibit, which reaches more than 2,200 fourth-grade youth each year.

Kinzler earned his bachelor's degree from NDSU.

■ BRENDEN KLEBE

Extension Agent, Agriculture and
Natural Resources
Bottineau County

"Brenden is driven by creating hands-on, meaningful learning opportunities that strengthen youth, families and community connections to the outdoors."

Brenden Klebe joined NDSU Extension in 2020 and serves as the agriculture and natural resources agent in Bottineau County.

Klebe's work demonstrates exceptional initiative in developing programs that respond to local needs, particularly in youth outdoor engagement and experiential learning. While serving as the Pierce County agriculture and natural resources agent, he launched the Get Outdoors Program in 2023 to address declining outdoor play among youth. By securing grant support, he provided families with free access to camping gear and later expanded the program to include fishing rods and tackle kits. These tools removed cost barriers while allowing youth to build real-world outdoor skills and confidence.

Klebe's programming encourages curiosity, observation and environmental awareness. His use of sensory-based scavenger hunts and progressive skill-building activities reflects a thoughtful and innovative approach to teaching. He grounds his work in science, connecting concepts in biology, ecology and physical systems directly to hands-on outdoor experiences.

Klebe earned his bachelor's degree from NDSU.

Excellence in Extension Early Career Award (continued)

■ GABRIELE (GABE) NELSON

Extension Agent,
Family Nutrition Program
Benson County

"Gabriele designs and leads impactful programs that engage diverse audiences in meaningful, inclusive learning experiences."

Gabe Nelson joined NDSU Extension in 2019 and serves as the family nutrition program agent in Benson County.

She develops and delivers culturally responsive programs that address food security, nutrition education, youth development and chronic disease prevention, with a focus on hands-on, experiential learning.

As a key partner with Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Nelson teaches food preservation workshops, manages the community garden, coordinates the campus farmers market, creates intergenerational learning opportunities and expands access to fresh, locally grown foods. Her work in facilitating youth programs such as Kids Cooking School and Baking School integrates STEM concepts and life skills in engaging, hands-on ways.

Nelson collaborates with colleagues and community partners on initiatives like Nourish and the eight-week Diabetes Prevention Program, ensuring programs are inclusive and evidence-based. Her innovative, hands-on teaching makes science-based information accessible and practical for participants of all ages.

Nelson earned her bachelor's degree from the University of North Dakota.

■ ROB PROULX

Agricultural Technology Systems
Specialist
Department of Agricultural and
Biosystems Engineering

"Dr. Proulx is a problem solver who quickly identifies challenges and shares practical solutions with stakeholders."

Rob Proulx joined NDSU Extension in 2023 as an agricultural technology systems specialist in the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering.

He has developed and delivered innovative educational programs that address real-world challenges for North Dakota producers, often going beyond his original job responsibilities to meet stakeholder needs.

A notable example is his work with "Delta T," a measure of atmospheric dryness that affects pesticide application. Proulx organized complex data on temperature and humidity differences and translated it into actionable guidance for producers, providing hands-on training during Extension field days. This initiative improved pesticide effectiveness and adoption of best practices in crop management.

Proulx also stepped in to support postharvest questions after a colleague's retirement, collaborating with faculty and staff to ensure stakeholders received timely, science-based advice. His ability to combine technical expertise, clear communication and creative problem solving has made him an invaluable resource for producers and colleagues alike.

Proulx earned his Ph.D. from the University of North Dakota, his master's degree from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota Crookston.

■ JAN STANKIEWICZ

Community Health and Nutrition
Specialist and NDSU Agriculture
Tribal Liaison
Extension Family and Community
Wellness

"Jan envisions future possibilities and maintains a positive attitude in the face of challenges, persistently driving efforts to secure solutions."

Jan Stankiewicz joined NDSU as a community health and nutrition specialist in 2016 and became the NDSU Agriculture tribal liaison in 2020.

She develops and delivers innovative, culturally responsive programs that address public health challenges across North Dakota, focusing on community-driven solutions that empower local populations to take active ownership of their health outcomes.

Stankiewicz employs a policy, systems and environment (PSE) approach to create sustainable, population-level change, improving food distribution, access to fresh produce, safe recreational spaces and overall community wellness. She partners with tribal leaders, local organizations and stakeholders to ensure initiatives are culturally relevant and responsive, fostering collaboration and long-term impact.

Known for her teamwork, innovation and creative problem-solving, Stankiewicz consistently introduces new approaches to Extension education while mentoring colleagues and building inclusive partnerships. Her work has led to measurable improvements in food security, health care access and the adoption of healthy, sustainable practices.

Stankiewicz earned her Master of Public Health certificate from NDSU, her master's degree from Montana State University and her bachelor's degree from the University of Mary.

Excellence in Extension Early Career Award (continued)

■ LYNNETTE VACHAL

Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development
Mountrail County

"Lynnette is committed to making a positive impact on the people and communities of Mountrail County through hands-on experiential 4-H youth programming. She goes above and beyond to ensure that the programs she delivers are high-quality and consistent with local needs."

Lynnette Vachal has served as the 4-H Youth Development Extension agent in Mountrail County since 2016.

She is dedicated to developing the next generation of leaders through hands-on, experiential educational programs. Vachal actively assesses community needs by engaging with the 4-H Council, families, volunteers and local leaders. High-impact programs include Reality Store, which teaches eighth and 10th graders about financial literacy and reaches over 200 youth annually. She leads STEM-focused initiatives such as Breakout EDU, Ozobots and youth horticulture activities. She also leads archery and air rifle programs, supporting approximately 80 youth in building self-discipline, focus and decision-making skills.

Vachal fosters teamwork and collaboration by coordinating with other Extension agents, neighboring counties and local organizations to deliver programs such as Farm to Table, Ag in the Classroom and Ag Experience Day. She partners with Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College to provide gardening and Native agriculture education and serves on statewide 4-H teams focused on STEM, leadership, communications and policy.

A creative and innovative educator, Vachal uses games, hands-on activities and experiential learning techniques to deliver science-based content, including biosecurity demonstrations, coding with Ozobots and practical agriculture lessons.

Vachal earned two bachelor's degrees from Minot State University.

■ RICHARD (WADE) WEBSTER

Assistant Professor and
Extension Soybean Pathologist
Department of Plant Pathology

"Dr. Webster demonstrates a strong commitment to translating research into practical recommendations for producers, engages stakeholders effectively and delivers timely, science-based solutions."

Wade Webster joined NDSU as an assistant professor and Extension soybean researcher in 2022 and became the Extension soybean pathologist in 2023.

In his short time with Extension, he has delivered more than 100 presentations and engaged audiences through radio, television, magazine articles and podcasts, reaching over 865,000 impressions. He delivers science-based information through field demonstrations, hands-on training and digital outreach, including county-level training for agents on soybean disease identification and management.

Webster demonstrates teamwork and innovation by serving on the NDSU Soybean Symposium organizing committee, collaborating with Ag Communication to expand social media outreach and contributing to multistate projects such as predictive disease models and the white mold ROI calculator. These tools provide farmers with actionable, real-time information to improve production and profitability.

He uses novel teaching methods, including interactive field-based demonstrations, physical samples to illustrate disease impact and multimedia content through the Crop Protection Network and Extension publications. His outreach extends to fungicide efficacy guides, plant disease management guides and multiple new Extension articles on emerging soybean diseases.

Webster earned his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his bachelor's degree from Montana State University.



AGSCO Excellence in Extension Award

NDSU Extension established this annual award to encourage and reward significant accomplishments and excellence in Extension educational programs. Individuals in their 11th year or more cumulative years of service to NDSU Extension are eligible for nomination. Nominees must hold an Extension appointment and be in the 2000 job band. Nominations are inclusive to county agents and specialists in the NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources.

■ KURT FROELICH

Extension Agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources
Stark-Billings County

"Through his ability to identify local needs, collaborate and build personal connections, Kurt has dedicated 40 years to delivering science-based Extension programs that benefit farmers, ranchers and communities."

Kurt Froelich began his career with NDSU Extension in 1985. Over the years, he has served as an agriculture and natural resources agent in Stark-Billings County and previously in Slope, Stutsman and Foster counties.

Over his career, he has consistently provided impactful educational programs addressing evolving local needs, including soil acidification, pest management, crop rotations and disaster response. Froelich founded the North Dakota Feedlot School at the Carrington Research Extension Center in 1996, a program that continues to equip livestock producers with tools to achieve proper feed rations. He also organizes Medora Beef Days and established the Diversity, Direction, and Dollars (DDD) program, which annually reaches 100-200 crop producers within a 150-mile radius of Dickinson.

Froelich excels in teamwork, collaborating with regional agriculture and natural resources agents to coordinate programming and bring innovative events such as Banquet in the Field to western North Dakota. During the pandemic, he quickly adapted programming, delivering virtual 4-H Achievement Days and anhydrous safety training, demonstrating his creativity and flexibility.

He uses hands-on teaching to improve learning and retention, employing soil pits, live weed seedlings, livestock showmanship and technology tools for pesticide applicator training. Froelich also adapted programs from other states, such as in 2021 bringing the North Dakota Public Leaders 4-H Showmanship Event from Oklahoma, which continues to connect youth with state leaders and fostering lasting relationships.

Froelich earned his master's and bachelor's degrees from NDSU.

■ RON HAUGEN

Farm Management Specialist
Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics

"Ron has demonstrated exceptional leadership, a commitment to impactful educational programming and outstanding service to the agricultural community in North Dakota and beyond."

Ron Haugen has served as a farm management specialist at NDSU since 1991.

Haugen develops annual crop budgets for up to 15 crops across nine regions, maintains the ARC-PLC Farm Bill decision tool and updates the North Dakota Agricultural Land Valuation Tax Assessment Model, providing guidance to farmers, lenders, policymakers and county officials statewide.

He collaborates on programs such as Ag Lenders Conferences and the annual publication Plotting a Course, helping producers and stakeholders apply science-based information to crop and financial decisions. Haugen delivers hands-on workshops and Zoom training to ensure effective use of his tools and timely guidance on income tax planning.

He earned his master's and bachelor's degrees from NDSU and his associate degree from North Dakota State School of Science.

■ SARA LAITE

Extension Agent,
Family and Community Wellness
Ramsey County

"Sara is a dedicated Extension agent who combines innovative, science-based education with collaborative leadership to empower North Dakotans of all ages through impactful programs in health, agriculture and youth development."

Sara Laite began her career with NDSU Extension in 2006.

For the past 19 years, she has provided leadership, mentorship and educational programs that meet the evolving needs of her community. She has guided youth through hands-on programs like the 2024 Field to Fork event, engaging 132 fourth-grade students and increasing agricultural knowledge by 21%. She also led the evidence-based Nourish series for older adults, helping participants adopt healthier lifestyle habits. Laite also delivers local programming, including "Babysitting: My First Job," "Cooking for One or Two" and "Banking on Strong Bones."

She mentors new Extension agents, participates in leadership programs such as North Central Extension Leadership Development and contributes to state committees. Laite's innovative, science-based teaching methods ensure practical learning outcomes for youth, adults and families across Ramsey County.

Laite earned her master's and bachelor's degrees from NDSU.

AGSCO Excellence in Extension Award (continued)

■ MIRANDA MEEHAN

Associate Professor, Extension Livestock
and Environmental Stewardship Specialist
School of Natural Resource Sciences

"Grit, collaboration and alignment come to mind when I think back over the 10-plus years of working with Dr. Meehan."

Miranda Meehan began her career with NDSU in 2015 as an assistant professor and Extension livestock and environmental stewardship specialist in the Department of Animal Sciences. In 2020, she also became the Extension Disaster Education Coordinator, and was promoted to associate professor in 2022. In 2025, she joined the School of Natural Resource Sciences as an associate professor and Extension livestock and environmental stewardship specialist.

Her research and Extension programs focus on grazing management, precision livestock technologies, integrated crop-livestock systems, riparian ecology and livestock water quality. She has led 88 professional development and training opportunities, created practical tools including a forage production kit and mobile app and developed innovative programs that support science-based decision-making for producers and Extension personnel.

Meehan established the Livestock Water Quality Program, training agents who have screened 2,441 water sources across 41 counties, resulting in management changes at 338 locations that affect over 67,000 head of livestock. She also led the Grassland Recovery Program, improving grazing practices on 17,000 acres and 5,000 livestock, while increasing agent engagement and producer adoption of adaptive management.

Her multifaceted approach includes presentations, workshops, webinars, hands-on activities, Extension publications and digital tools, ensuring effective knowledge transfer. Meehan's programs have earned multiple state and national awards for their innovation and impact.

Meehan earned her Ph.D., and her master's and bachelor's degrees from NDSU.

Charles and Linda Moses Staff Award



This annual award, established by the Office of the Vice President for Agriculture, recognizes significant contributions to the mission of NDSU Agriculture by professional staff (3000 job band) on and off campus. The recipient must have at least three years of continuous service in a staff position with an appointment in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources; North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station; or NDSU Extension.

■ JANA DAEUBER

Research Specialist
Department of Agricultural and
Biosystems Engineering

"Jana's technical expertise, creativity and unwavering dedication make her an invaluable resource to our faculty, staff and students."

Jana Daeuber has served as a research specialist at NDSU since 1998, providing comprehensive IT and technical support for the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering.

She maintains departmental computers and software, manages specialized equipment (including 3D printers, laser cutters and large-format printers) and supports multimedia projects, instrumentation systems and field research installations. Daeuber also played a key role in coordinating the department's move to Ladd Hall, using her CAD skills to design functional floor plans that meet research, teaching and Extension needs.

Beyond her technical responsibilities, Daeuber actively serves on departmental committees, including Safety, Recruitment and Building and Space. She also provides mentorship and support to faculty, staff and students. Her dependability, creativity and collaborative approach ensure smooth operations, enhance research productivity and foster a positive, inclusive work environment.

Daeuber earned her bachelor's degree from NDSU.

■ SUSAN FINNESETH

Grants Coordinator
School of Natural Resource Sciences
and Departments of Agricultural
and Biosystems Engineering and
Microbiological Sciences

"Susan consistently keeps track of every detail, not only with regard to formats, but also content that allows researchers to concentrate on crafting strong research proposals."

Susan Finneseth joined NDSU as an administrative secretary in 2005 and later served as an administrative assistant and program manager for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and Family Nutrition Program.

Finneseth currently works as the grants coordinator for three departments within the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources. In this role, she plays a crucial part in supporting the grant acquisition process by assisting with grant proposal preparation, coordinating the internal grant approval process and ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. Her responsibilities include managing grant deadlines, reviewing budgetary aspects of proposals and identifying grant opportunities.

Finneseth collaborates with various offices and maintains a comprehensive understanding of grant policies and submission systems. She also provides faculty with information on strengthening their proposals.

Finneseth earned her bachelor's degree from NDSU and is currently pursuing her master's degree.

Charles and Linda Moses Staff Award (continued)

■ SCOTT HOSELTON

Director for the Dr. Thomas Glass
Biotech Innovation Core
Department of Microbiological
Sciences

"Scott's technical expertise, innovation and collaborative leadership have transformed the Biotech Innovation Core into a hub for research, education and industry partnerships."

Scott Hoselton joined NDSU in 2001 and currently directs the Dr. Thomas Glass Biotech Innovation Core.

The Core functions as a fee-for-service and wet-lab incubator facility supporting the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources, as well as campus collaborations and external biotechnology partners. Hoselton manages all aspects of the Core, including scientific operations, budgeting, compliance, client engagement and staff training, while providing technical expertise and mentorship to faculty, students and industry collaborators.

He has helped nearly every department in NDSU Agriculture advance their research projects, train students in cutting-edge techniques and integrate advanced laboratory methods into coursework. Hoselton extends his expertise to farmers and AgTech startups, developing assays and troubleshooting complex problems. He also offers hands-on training programs such as the Molecular Biology 2.0 Camp for high school students.

Under his leadership, the Core has grown substantially in staff, equipment and scope, earning recognition as a regional resource for agricultural innovation.

Hoselton earned his master's and bachelor's degrees from NDSU.

■ SALLY MANN

Research Specialist
Department of Plant Sciences

"Through her dependability, initiative and teamwork, Sally has consistently exceeded expectations, contributing to the success and reputation of NDSU's Durum Wheat Breeding and Genetics Project."

Sally Mann joined NDSU as a research technician in 2010 and advanced to research specialist in 2013.

As a research specialist with the Durum Wheat Breeding and Genetics Project, Mann is extensively involved in all aspects of small-grain breeding and genetics. She prepares experimental fields at multiple locations, packages seed and organizes yield trials, including segregating populations, observation nurseries, drill strips and disease-screening nurseries. She collects agronomic and disease resistance data, conducts selection within segregating populations, manages harvests and oversees students and seasonal staff throughout the growing season. Mann also manages greenhouse experiments, performs controlled crosses and collaborates with the USDA on disease-resistance evaluations.

Mann's dedication and expertise have been essential to the program's success, supporting the continuity of research across multiple nurseries and through personnel transitions. She has trained new staff, delivered presentations to research centers and producer groups and has fostered an inclusive and supportive work environment. In 2024, she received the NDSU Core Values Award in recognition of her commitment to community, integrity, impact and innovation.

Mann earned her bachelor's degree from NDSU.

■ GLENN MARTIN

Research Specialist
Dickinson Research Extension Center

"Glenn combines technical expertise with patience and clarity, making complex agronomy concepts easy to understand for students and colleagues alike."

Glenn Martin joined NDSU in 1986 as a work-study student in the winter wheat and oat breeding programs and has served as an agronomy research specialist at the Dickinson Research Extension Center (DREC) since 1990.

Martin conducts field trials and experiments relevant to cropping systems in southwestern North Dakota, focusing on integrated pest management, plot management and accurate data collection. He collaborates with researchers to develop and implement effective research protocols that address regional agricultural challenges. Martin provides technical and logistical support to DREC staff, prepares reports, delivers presentations, contributes to publications and supervises and mentors students involved in agronomy research. He operates, maintains and, when necessary, fabricates field equipment, ensuring compliance with all safety regulations and best practices.

His contributions have been critical to sustaining DREC's agronomy program, especially during periods without a dedicated research agronomist. He is widely respected for his dependability, initiative and judgment. Examples include fabricating a fertilizer applicator to enhance no-till practices, mentoring numerous students and providing guidance on the design and functionality of the new Wardner Agricultural Laboratory. His effective communication skills and technical expertise make him an invaluable resource for colleagues, students and the broader agricultural community.

Martin has actively embraced professional growth through training on the Genovix program for big-data management, enhancing the efficiency of plot management and data analysis, and strengthening collaboration with on-campus researchers.

Martin earned his bachelor's degree from NDSU.

Charles and Linda Moses Staff Award (continued)

■ JESSICA SCHERER

Research Manager
Department of Plant Pathology

"Jessica is a trusted leader whose expertise, dedication and initiative consistently elevate the work of those around her."

Jessica Scherer joined NDSU in 2012 as a graduate research assistant and became a research specialist in 2015. In 2019, she was named research manager for the Department of Plant Pathology, where she leads and supports field, laboratory and greenhouse projects evaluating disease management strategies.

Scherer's responsibilities include designing experiments, managing data, analyzing results with statistical programs such as ARM and SAS and providing critical guidance to faculty, graduate students and stakeholders.

Her work underpins disease management recommendations that save North Dakota farmers millions of dollars annually. She demonstrates exceptional leadership, managing complex research portfolios, supervising part-time staff and making critical experimental and operational decisions. Scherer's judgment, initiative and dependability make her a cornerstone of the Extension plant pathology program, trusted by colleagues across academia and industry.

Committed to continuous professional growth, Scherer participates in national scientific meetings, specialized trainings and leadership development programs. She received the NDSU Core Values Award in 2025 and continues to advance research, mentor others and contribute to NDSU's mission of providing practical solutions and lifelong learning opportunities to North Dakotans.

Scherer earned her master's degree from NDSU and her bachelor's degree from Valley City State University.

■ DEB TANNER

Graphic Designer
Agriculture Communication

"Deb's insightful designs enhance the visual appeal of our publications and materials, making complex information accessible to audiences across the state and beyond."

Deb Tanner joined NDSU in 1978 as a graphic artist and advanced to graphic designer in 1989.

She supports NDSU Agriculture by creating high-quality visuals for print, web, video and presentations, helping faculty and staff communicate research-based content effectively and attractively. Tanner consults with clients on project goals adjusting to various audiences, selects appropriate illustrations, fonts, colors and materials that she ensures meet NDSU requirements.

In addition to her design work, Tanner leads the Agriculture Communication graphics team, maintaining design standards, managing files and coordinating supplies, hardware and software. Her recent projects include the NDSU Extension Plant Diagnostic Series crop disease guides and the Field to Fork educational materials for home gardeners. Tanner also designs handouts, impact statements and presentations for legislative and stakeholder communications, helping tell the story of NDSU Agriculture's impact.

Tanner is committed to professional growth through workshops, courses and collaborative learning. She has received multiple awards, including an NDSU Core Values Award in 2025.

Tanner earned an associate degree from Northwest Technical College.

■ SARAH UNDERDAHL

Manager for the Beef Cattle Research Complex
Department of Animal Sciences

"Sarah is keenly aware and highly skilled in tasks requisite for all facets of her position. Although her primary role is managing the research facility, she consistently makes significant contributions to all three pillars of NDSU's land-grant mission."

Sarah Underdahl joined NDSU in 2004 as a research specialist in durum breeding and genetics. She became assistant manager of the Beef Cattle Research Complex (BCRC) in 2013 and was appointed interim manager in 2019 before assuming her current role as manager.

Underdahl oversees all aspects of the BCRC, including supervising staff and undergraduate employees, coordinating research projects with faculty and graduate students, maintaining facilities and equipment, assuring cattle health and welfare and managing budgets and billing. She also contributes to teaching and Extension by leading tours, hands-on activities and beef field days, which provide students and stakeholders with valuable experience and knowledge.

Underdahl's dependability, initiative and communication skills make her a cornerstone of the beef research team. She proactively supports research activities, ensures animal well-being, and facilitates data collection and analysis, all while also assisting with research across other campus facilities and Research Extension Centers. Her commitment to professional growth is evident in earning a master's degree in animal sciences while working full-time, which has enhanced her ability to contribute to research, teaching and Extension initiatives.

Underdahl earned her master's and bachelor's degrees from NDSU.



Donald and Jo Anderson Staff Award

This annual award, established by the Office of the Vice President for Agriculture, recognizes significant contributions to the mission of NDSU Agriculture and/or Extension by office support staff (5000 job band) on and off campus or county Extension support staff with at least three years of continuous service. The recipient must be in a staff position with an appointment in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources; North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station; or NDSU Extension.

■ GRACE BRENNAN

Academic Assistant
School of Natural Resource Sciences

"Grace's commitment, kindness and strong work ethic make them an invaluable member of the School of Natural Resource Sciences team."

Grace Brennan joined NDSU in 2021 and serves as the academic assistant for the School of Natural Resource Sciences.

They provide a wide range of administrative, operational and office support activities, assisting faculty, staff and students with their day-to-day needs.

As the unit record coordinator, Brennan ensures departmental records are accurate and accessible. They also oversee departmental communications, manage event planning and coordinate facility and travel logistics. Their efforts help streamline operations and strengthen communication across the department.

Brennan plays a key role in supporting graduate students, assisting with admissions and progress tracking to help them reach their academic goals. They also contribute to the hiring process, manage inventory and assets and provide vital support for research and extension activities that advance sustainable practices across North Dakota.

Brennan earned a master's degree from Minnesota State University Moorhead and bachelor's degrees from Valley City State University and NDSU.

■ EILEEN BURINGRUD

Administrative Assistant
Department of Plant Sciences

"Eileen is very effective and well organized and always goes above and beyond to provide support in many areas and for many individuals. She is the 'go-to' person when any questions appear."

Eileen Buringrud began her career at NDSU in 1977 as a secretary and has served as the administrative assistant for the Department of Plant Sciences since 1984.

With 48 years of service, she has shown remarkable dedication to the Department of Plant Sciences, the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources (CAFSNR), and NDSU Extension.

As office manager for the largest department in the CAFSNR, Buringrud supports more than 180 personnel, including faculty, research staff, graduate students and visiting scientists. She manages all benefitted and graduate student hiring, personnel management and departmental operations with exceptional efficiency and care. Her ability to balance numerous responsibilities is critical to the department's success. From scheduling interviews to compiling departmental reports, she demonstrates her strong organizational and leadership skills.

Buringrud is known as a key contact person in the department, always ready to assist with any question or concern, whether large or small. She consistently approaches her work with kindness and professionalism, ensuring that faculty, staff and students feel supported and valued. Her calm demeanor, attention to detail and willingness to help have earned her the respect and admiration of colleagues across campus.

Buringrud earned an associate degree from the North Dakota State School of Science.

■ BLAINE EROVICK

Distribution Coordinator
Agriculture Communication

"Blaine's desire to provide quality service and be fiscally responsible to our customers is evident to all who work with him. His attention to providing the customer with a positive experience is his top priority."

Blaine Erovick joined NDSU in 2018 as a grounds maintenance worker and became the Agriculture Communication distribution coordinator in 2019.

Erovick divides his responsibilities between his Agriculture Communication distribution role and his delivery position with Print and Copy Services. Erovick maintains the print inventory of NDSU Extension publications which includes numerous 4-H materials. He collaborates between Agriculture Communication team members and authors to ensure the most up-to-date publications are available. Additionally, he packages and prepares all shipping orders using various shipping companies and oversees the checkout process for 4-H educational trucks.

In his Print and Copy Services delivery role, Erovick plans his delivery route in advance to prioritize efficiency and ensure timely deliveries across campus. He also manages the delivery van's maintenance schedule and reports monthly mileage.

His attention to detail, flexibility and problem-solving skills play a key role in ensuring timely distribution of critical tools, including the annual Weed, Insect and Plant Disease Control Guide used statewide. Erovick's reliability and teamwork exemplify NDSU Agriculture and Extension's service-focused mission.

Donald and Jo Anderson Staff Award (continued)

■ BARBARA NILLES

Administrative Secretary
Department of Plant Pathology

"Barb's contributions reflect a deep commitment to agricultural education and Extension, supporting not only our internal teams but also the broader agricultural community."

Barbara Nilles joined NDSU in 2013 as an administrative secretary in the Department of Plant Pathology.

She provides vital support to faculty and staff by coordinating daily operations and managing key Extension efforts. Nilles prepares the Crop & Pest Management Report, assists with the Eastern Crop Scout School and the Western Crop & Pest Management School, organizes travel logistics and oversees departmental deposits and safety reporting. She also maintains the department's website and social media pages, helping Plant Pathology reach more than 3,900 followers and the Crop & Pest Report more than 1,600.

Her creativity shines through the development of the department's newsletter that launched in 2024 with a 95% open rate. This in addition to her leadership of the NDSU Extension Crop & Pest Report that has reached nearly 5,000 subscribers worldwide. Nilles's professionalism, reliability and collaborative spirit make her a cornerstone of the department.

Nilles holds Certified Administrative Professional (CAP) and Professional Administrative Certificate of Excellence (PACE) credentials and is currently pursuing the Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) certification. She earned a bachelor's degree from NDSU and an associate degree from Aaker's College (now Rasmussen University).

■ LINDA SCHUSTER

Administrative Assistant
Carrington Research Extension Center

"Linda is one of the best human beings I know; she acts through compassion and a commitment to service and agriculture to advance the mission of the Carrington Research Extension Center (CREC) and NDSU for the betterment of all involved."

Linda Schuster joined NDSU in 2010 as an administrative secretary at the CREC and was later promoted to administrative assistant in recognition of her outstanding service.

She provides vital administrative and technical support for Extension, including office management, receptionist duties, records, accounting, billing, compliance training and computer system oversight.

Schuster's initiative is evident in her coordination of the Getting It Right webinar series and the Advanced Crop Advisors Workshop, her management of safety and fleet compliance and her mentorship of new staff. She also leads community outreach for the Northern Hardy Fruit Evaluation Project, maintaining strong relationships with local growers and supporting continued engagement.

Known for her professionalism, foresight and steady dedication, Schuster consistently exceeds expectations and serves as a trusted resource within the CREC.

Schuster earned her bachelor's degree from Minnesota State University Moorhead.



Rick and Jody Burgum Staff Award

This annual award, established by the Office of the Vice President for Agriculture, recognizes significant contributions to the mission of NDSU Agriculture by support staff in technical and paraprofessional, crafts/trades or services positions (4000, 6000 or 7000 job bands) on and off campus with at least three years of continuous service. The recipient must be in a staff position with an appointment in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources; North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station; or NDSU Extension.

■ CHRIS ANDERSON

Production Manager for Print and
Copy Services
Agriculture Communication

“Chris elevates NDSU Agriculture’s printed materials through his dedicated leadership, attention to detail and outstanding customer service.”

Chris Anderson joined NDSU in 2006 as a press operator for Print and Copy Services and now serves as the unit’s manager.

He oversees the production of printed materials for NDSU Agriculture, Extension and campus partners, including publications, brochures, manuals, business cards and event pieces. He supervises staff in addition to managing resources and equipment while ensuring that projects meet university standards.

Anderson consistently goes above and beyond, often working after hours to ensure critical guides — such as annual weed, insect and pest management materials — are available before winter meetings. He is known for excellent customer service, suggests improvements on projects and offers creative solutions when needs fall outside in-house capabilities. His commitment to efficiency and continuous improvement supports operational success and team growth.

He also serves the broader campus through leadership and involvement, including prior service on the Staff Senate.

Anderson earned his bachelor’s degree from Minnesota State University Moorhead.



Access and Opportunity Award

This annual award recognizes an individual or group who has achieved significant impact for work related to the agriculture strategic goal, celebrate, integrate and embrace the power of access and opportunity. All departments/units, committees and individuals are eligible.

■ CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT AGRICULTURE GROUP

Xinhua Jia, Xiaoyu (Iris) Feng and Sulaymon Eshkabilov
Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering

"The Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) group has opened doors for countless students, faculty and community members to engage in cutting-edge agricultural innovation and education."

Research by the CEA group, led by Xinhua Jia, focuses on using technology to grow food in protected environments such as greenhouses and vertical farms. Jia's research or the CEA group research is part of the Food, Energy and Water Security (FEWS) initiative that addresses challenges such as North Dakota's short growing season and unpredictable climate. Key areas of her research include water management, automation and energy efficiency.

Iris Feng leads the energy efficiency and environmental impact components of the CEA initiative. Her analyses guide growers, tribal partners and educators to understand technology costs, sustainability and long-term viability. Feng strengthens access and opportunity by collaborating with tribal colleges, contributing to CEA workforce development efforts, co-teaching ABEN 286 and representing North Dakota in regional and national CEA networks.

Sulaymon Eshkabilov leads the automation and sensor technology work. By integrating machine learning and IoT platforms, he makes advanced automation practical and affordable for growers and students. Eshkabilov expands opportunity by providing hands-on training in sensors, robotics and automation technology in addition to support for workshops and demonstrations that bring digital agriculture tools to growers and tribal partners across the region.

■ SHANNON UEKER

Administrative Secretary and Graduate and Extension Programs Assistant
Department of Plant Sciences

"Shannon feels that meeting people from other countries and cultures makes her feel whole and helps create the community she wants to be part of."

Shannon Ueker plays a pivotal role in creating a welcoming environment for students in the Department of Plant Sciences, particularly for international students. She regularly attends international student group meetings and participates in cultural events such as Diwali and Black History celebrations. Her efforts to international inclusion extends to promoting the Plant Sciences programs at conferences to connect with students worldwide, especially those from underrepresented countries. Ueker's efforts align with NDSU Agriculture's mission of providing lifelong learning opportunities and improving lives.

Nearly 62% of the department's graduate students represent 23 different countries and Ueker is often the first person they meet. Her efforts to support international students is evident as she provides ongoing support through their academic journey. Her dedication has fostered a sense of community, encouraging international students to recommend NDSU to others while continuing to make the recruitment process more successful and sustainable. Ueker's commitment to cultural exchange strengthens the department and builds a better world for students and faculty alike.

2024 Award Recipients

Larson/Yaggie

Excellence in Research Award

Xin (Rex) Sun,

*Department of Agricultural and
Biosystems Engineering*

Eugene R. Dahl

Excellence in Research Award

Bill Wilson,

*Department of Agribusiness and
Applied Economics*

Earl and Dorothy Foster

Excellence in Teaching Award

Erik Hanson,

*Department of Agribusiness and
Applied Economics*

H. Roald and Janet Lund

Excellence in Teaching Award

Tara Swanson,

Department of Animal Sciences

William J. and Angelyn A. Austin

Excellence in Advising Award

Matt Olhoft,

*Department of Agricultural and
Biosystems Engineering*

Excellence in Extension

Early Career Award

Travis Hoffman,

Department of Animal Sciences

AGSCO Excellence in Extension Award

Sam Markell,

Department of Plant Pathology

Charles and Linda Moses Staff Award

Megan Ramsett,

*Department of Microbiological
Sciences*

Donald and Jo Anderson Staff Award

Sara Schuchard-McGregor,

Langdon Research Extension Center

Rick and Jody Burgum Staff Award

Ronald Johnson,

AES Main Station Farm Shop

Celebrate, Integrate and Embrace the
Power of Diversity Award

Erika Berg,

*Bison Strides Equine-Assisted Service
Program, Department of Animal
Sciences*

2025 Faculty and Staff Award Nominees

LARSON/YAGGIE

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD

Samiran Banerjee

Sulaymon Eshkabilov

Upinder Gill

Travis Seaborn

Sandro Steinbach

Minwei Xu

EUGENE R. DAHL

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD

Carl Dahlen

J. Paulo Flores

Brian Jenks

Julie Pasche

Deirdre Prischmann-Voldseth

Md Mukhlesur Rahman

Sheela Ramamoorthy

Cheryl Wachenheim

EARL AND DOROTHY FOSTER

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Ewumbua Monono

Jiajia Rao

H. ROALD AND JANET LUND

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Edward (Shawn) DeKeyser

Glenn Dorsam

Siew Hoon Lim

Stacey Ostby

WILLIAM J. AND ANGELYN A. AUSTIN

EXCELLENCE IN ADVISING AWARD

Thomas Baldwin

Barney Geddes

Lauren Hanna

Thomas Krumel

Xin (Rex) Sun

EXCELLENCE IN EXTENSION

EARLY CAREER AWARD

Clair Keene

Don Kinzler

Brenden Klebe

Gabriele (Gabe) Nelson

Rob Proulx

Jan Stankiewicz

Lynnette Vachal

Richard (Wade) Webster

AGSCO

EXCELLENCE IN EXTENSION AWARD

Kurt Froelich

Ron Haugen

Sara Laite

Miranda Meehan

CHARLES AND LINDA MOSES

STAFF AWARD

Jana Daeuber

Susan Finneseth

Scott Hoselton

Sally Mann

Glenn Martin

Jessica Scherer

Deb Tanner

Sarah Underdahl

DONALD AND JO ANDERSON

STAFF AWARD

Grace Brennan

Eileen Buringrud

Blaine Erovick

Barbara Nilles

Linda Schuster

RICK AND JODY BURGUM

STAFF AWARD

Chris Anderson

ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY AWARD

Controlled Environment

Agriculture Group -

Xinhua Jia, Xiaoyu (Iris) Feng
and Sulaymon Eshkabilov

Shannon Ueker

For a list of prior award recipients, visit the "Faculty and Staff Awards" link at www.ndsu.edu/vpag

NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 100, 701-231-7708, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, 701-231-7881.