



**Testimony of
Ryan Gregg
North Dakota Farmers Union
State Board of Agriculture Research and Education
Feedback Session on
November 13, 2025**

Chair Gulleeson and members of SBARE,

North Dakota Farmers Union appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations to the State Board of Agriculture and Education on its priorities for the 2027 Legislative Session and the 2027-29 budget cycle.

The SBARE process of collecting North Dakota agriculture priorities is working. The research and outreach rankings it establishes each biennium, have become a blueprint in the executive budgeting and legislative appropriation process. NDFU strongly supports the continued investment in research that opens new markets for producers, and in extension efforts that bring information to producers, strengthening our state's agricultural economy.

We appreciate SBARE's leadership in establishing the Center for Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies (CAPTS) and supporting research in biofuels and carbon management. This work helps producers innovate and compete in emerging markets. SBARE's leadership for key initiatives have helped maintain North Dakota agriculture's competitive edge.

Family farms and ranches depend on a strong support system that includes land-grant universities, public research and extension. These investments must be expanded. While it funded many SBARE priorities we supported, the 2025 Legislature implemented a 2% cut to the NDSU Experiment Station and Extension Service's operating budget. The reduced funding is intensified when coupled with ongoing inflation. Reduced spending power and authority harm researchers' and educators' ability to deliver results. The value of new initiatives is diminished when the means to operate is separately reduced by the legislature. NDFU supports the restoration and enhancement of this operational budgets. We feel that SBARE should prioritize the restoration, and enhancement of NDSU Experiment Station and Extension operations budgets. We also support additional funding for deferred maintenance so that research and outreach are conducted in safe, modern facilities.

NDFU also suggests that SBARE seek a change or an exemption for the current State of North Dakota requirement in which the Office of Management and Budget withholds appropriated funds connected with anticipated staff vacancies. The vacant FTE pool created by the 2023 Legislature has disproportionately impacted NDSU research and extension because it is funded

with a percentage of the appropriated budget for these entities. Other entities in the University System are exempted from funding this vacant FTE pool, the experiment station and extension should be similarly relieved of this budget allotment, this change has strained research and extension programs by limiting flexibility in managing budgets and conducting basic farm functions and repairs.

Finally, we encourage continued investment in the CAPTS center. Building their ability to provide policy, market, and impact analysis is essential in order for them to better accomplish their mission. Investing resources in hiring three policy analysts will allow the center to generate analysis faster for producers, state and federal policymakers on North Dakota and Upper Midwest agriculture.

Public research, education, and extension are essential to helping agriculture producers meet today's challenges. North Dakota's agricultural economy depends on continued investment and long-term vision.

Thank you for considering North Dakota Farmers Union members and other agriculture producers needs and concerns as you develop the next budget and its priorities.