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**North Dakota Soybean Growers Association**  
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**SBARE Board Meeting – Minot, ND**  
**November 13, 2025**

**Submitted on behalf of:** North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) and North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA)

The soybean sector is a fundamental part of North Dakota's agricultural economy, driving farm income, rural employment, and community growth throughout the state. key highlights include:

- Soybeans are the leading crop and economic driver in North Dakota, surpassing all other crops in terms of acreage, production, and overall economic impact.
- In 2024, farmers planted 6.6 million acres and harvested 6.55 million acres, producing 246 million bushels valued at approximately \$2.62 billion.
- North Dakota ranks fourth nationally in soybean acreage and eighth in total production, highlighting the crop's significance on a national scale.
- Since 1980, soybean production in the state has increased nearly 70-fold, transforming from a regional specialty into a statewide economic powerhouse.
- Soybeans are now grown across the state, from the Red River Valley to the western North Dakota, supporting thousands of farm families and strengthening rural communities.

Another opportunity for growth in the soybean sector and North Dakota agriculture is the expansion of soybean crushing capacity in the state. In September 2023, the first crush plant, Green Bison Soy Processing in Spiritwood, began operations. The North Dakota Soybean Processors plant in Casselton became fully operational in the fall of 2024, and Epitome Energy is planning a full-service facility in Grand Forks. These processing plants improve market access, enhance the local basis, increase farmer profitability, create rural jobs, and promote broader economic development.

Building on this momentum, the NDSC and NDSGA have identified four strategic funding priorities aimed at sustaining growth, fostering innovation, and enhancing the long-term competitiveness of North Dakota's soybean industry:

1. North Dakota State University (NDSU) Public Soybean Breeding Program – Operating Support
2. NDSU Center for Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies (CAPTS) – Policy, Markets, and Impact Analysis Support
3. Soybean Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program – Operating Support
4. Soybean Meal Utilization and Livestock Development Initiative – Program Support

## **1. NDSU Public Soybean Breeding Program – Operating Support**

North Dakota soybean production faces unique challenges, including short growing seasons, cold soils, and pressures from weeds, diseases, and environmental stresses. The NDSU public soybean breeding program develops varieties specifically adapted to these conditions, including early-maturing lines, conventional and herbicide-tolerant varieties, and soybeans for specialty-markets.

In recent years, the NDSC has partnered with NDSU leadership to strengthen the program through strategic planning, staff recruitment, and targeted investments in modern breeding tools and advanced genetic traits. The program now incorporates new herbicide-resistance traits, such as Enlist E3 and LibertyLink (LL), along with new sources of resistance to soybean cyst nematode (SCN) and other major diseases.

Currently, soybean producers are facing significant market challenges, including low commodity prices, limited market access, and high production costs, all of which are eroding profitability and reducing the resources available for research and breeding. While the NDSC and regional partners remain committed to supporting this breeding program, these organizations alone cannot fully fund operations at the level necessary to maintain progress. Without state operating support, the timely development and release of new soybean varieties could be delayed.

### **Request:**

State funding is needed to support the operating costs of the public soybean breeding program. This investment is essential to sustain the program's momentum, protect prior investments, and accelerate the development and release of high-performing, locally adapted soybean varieties.

## **2. NDSU Center for Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies (CAPTS) – Policy, Markets, and Impact Analysis Support**

North Dakota soybean producers operate in a highly dynamic global marketplace where trade policy, transportation logistics, and shifting market conditions directly affect local prices and farm profitability. While research and Extension programs continue to address critical production challenges, it is equally important to strengthen understanding of the demand side of agriculture—commodity prices, trade dynamics, and global market shifts—that shape long-term profitability. Both production and demand are essential to a resilient and competitive agricultural economy.

The CAPTS at NDSU provides vital analysis connecting policy, markets, and economic outcomes to support informed decisions for producers, agribusinesses, and policymakers. CAPTS delivers decision-focused, North Dakota specific analysis on agricultural markets, trade, logistics, renewable fuels, and farm policy. The CAPTS Program seeks to establish three dedicated analyst roles: Agricultural Policy Analyst, Markets and Trade Analyst, and Economic Impact/Contribution Specialist who will work in coordination with NDSU Extension, NDAES Research Extension Centers, and state agencies to translate research into timely, actionable information. The NDSC and NDSGA support this proposal and recognize the importance of expanding analytical capacity to strengthen market insight and policy responsiveness for North Dakota agriculture.

**Request:**

State funding is requested to establish the CAPTS Program in Policy, Markets, and Impact Analysis. This investment will:

- 1) Build analytical capacity for policy, markets, and trade evaluation.
- 2) Deliver timely, decision-ready insights to producers and policymakers.
- 3) Support data pipelines, models, and dashboards used across the agricultural sector.
- 4) Ensure North Dakota remains proactive and competitive in national and global agricultural markets.

**3. Soybean Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program – Operating Support**

North Dakota soybean producers face growing challenges from weeds, diseases, and insect pests that directly impact productivity and profitability. Since its first detection in Richland County in 2003, SCN has spread across many of state's soybean-producing counties and continues to expand into new areas. SCN is now established across much of the state, affecting soybeans, dry edible beans, and other rotational crops. In infested fields, yield losses of up to 30% have been reported. Resistance in many varieties is losing effectiveness as more virulent SCN populations develop.

White mold remains a severe problem in eastern ND, while Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) has expanded rapidly across multiple counties within the past three years, with both diseases reducing yields by up to 50% or more in severe cases. Red crown rot, recently confirmed in neighboring states, poses an emerging risk of introduction into North Dakota. This soilborne disease can result in 30–40% yield loss in affected areas and currently lacks resistant varieties or effective management options.

Herbicide-resistant weeds such as kochia, waterhemp, common ragweed, and Palmer amaranth are spreading, driving weed control costs up 30–50% per acre and causing up to 40% yield loss when left unmanaged. Waterhemp is now the #1 weed challenge in the Red River Valley and is spreading westward. Palmer amaranth, another highly competitive and herbicide-resistant pigweed species, has now been confirmed in 16 counties as of late October 2025, including the most recent detections in Adams and Divide counties. Both waterhemp and Palmer amaranth can produce up to one million seeds per plant and exhibit resistance to multiple herbicide groups, including Groups (2, 4, 5, 9, 14, and 27) making them extremely difficult to control.

Insect pests are currently less widespread, but pyrethroid-resistant soybean aphids, soybean gall midge (confirmed once in ND two years ago), and soybean leaf miner remain a concern. NDSU researchers and Extension specialists have developed strong diagnostic and monitoring capacity; however, current support is fragmented and short-term, limiting their ability to respond effectively to rapidly evolving threats.

**Request:**

State funding is requested to support ongoing operations of a coordinated Soybean IPM Program to:

- 1) Monitor and survey key diseases, weeds, and insect pests.
- 2) Maintain field trials and diagnostics, and provide timely, Extension-ready recommendations.

- 3) Strengthen North Dakota's capacity to protect yields, limit resistance development, and safeguard farm profitability.

#### **4. Soybean Meal Utilization and Livestock Development Initiative Support**

North Dakota now has two operational soybean crushing facilities and one proposed facility currently in the permitting stage. Together, they represent a major opportunity to expand the state's livestock feeding and value-added industries. Two operational soybean crushing facilities together process approximately 95–100 million bushels of soybeans annually, producing about 2.2 million tons of soybean meal along with significant volumes of soybean hulls.

While oil from these facilities supplies renewable fuel and food markets, in-state demand for soybean meal and hulls remains limited, leading to surpluses that must be exported at lower value. The state's livestock base is modest, dominated by beef cattle with relatively limited dairy, swine, and poultry production. Expanding livestock feeding within North Dakota presents a major opportunity for agricultural and rural economic growth. Livestock enterprises, particularly dairy, swine, and poultry, create stable local demand for soybean meal, generate nutrient-rich manure that supports soil health, and enhance farm profitability through circular nutrient use.

Momentum is being built in North Dakota's livestock industry. Riverview LLP has approval for a 12,500-head dairy near Abercrombie and a 25,000-cow facility in Traill County. Several proposed swine facilities are also moving forward and expanded NDSU Extension programs further signal renewed interest in livestock growth. However, these efforts alone will not absorb the soybean meal produced by the state's three crush plants, underscoring the need for a coordinated, research-based strategy to link soybean processing with livestock expansion.

##### **Request:**

State funding is requested to launch a Soybean Meal Utilization and Livestock Development Initiative that will expand local feed demand and strengthen North Dakota livestock and processing sectors.

Implemented in partnership with NDSU and industry collaborators, the initiative would:

- 1) Conduct applied feed and market research to guide livestock expansion.
- 2) Perform infrastructure and economic analysis to identify growth opportunities.
- 3) Support industry coordination, education and outreach, and pilot projects demonstrating soybean meal and hull use in North Dakota feed systems.

## **Closing Statement**

On behalf of the NDSC and NDSGA, thank you for your support for ND Agriculture. I appreciate your service to ND farmers, ranchers, and their families.

We look forward to working with you to help make your SBARE priorities a reality for the benefit of all the North Dakota agricultural community. If you have questions or need additional information or comments, please feel free to contact me.

### **Miki Miheguli**

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