

NORTH DAKOTA STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION February 12, 2026 MEETING MINUTES | Fargo, ND

The State Board of Agricultural Research and Education met for a regular meeting on **February 17, 2026**. Present: Ethan Address (representing the ND Department of Agriculture and Commissioner Goehring), Jim Bahm (virtual), Doug Bichler (virtual), Mike Clemens, John Dhuyvetter (virtual), Rep. Austin Foss, Aaron Galbreath (virtual), Chair Pam Gulleeson, Scott Huso, Sen. Jerry Klein, Greg Lardy, John Nordgaard, and Julie Zikmund. Absent: Interim Pres. Rick Berg, and Scott Ouradnik

Chair Gulleeson called the meeting to order at **9:30 a.m.**

Approval of January 27, 2026 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Scott Huso made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Julie Zikmund seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Administrative Update from Greg Lardy, Joe and Norma Peltier VP for Agriculture, Dean, Director, Director

Dr. Lardy updated the board on several items, including: 1) Center for Risk and Trade; the Agribusiness and Applied Economics Department was unable to hire either of the top two candidates for the position and will be re-advertising the position. 2) The 100th Little International was held on February 13 and 14th. A number of alumni attended the event. 3) NDSU Agriculture has hired an architect to assist with master planning and initial renderings for a replacement for Shepperd Arena. 4) Several legislators have recently announced they will not be seeking reelection, including Senator Randy Burkhart, Representative Mike Lefor, Representative Don Vigesaa, and Representative Jared Hagert. 4) Board Chair Gulleeson, Gretchen Wagendorf, and Dr. Lardy met with representatives from the Governor's Office and the Office of Management and Budget to discuss budget preparations for the 2027 legislative session. It is expected that the 2027 biennium will require a more conservative fiscal approach than recent biennia. 6) John Nordgaard has created an endowment that will support an endowed professorship in the area of applied potato pathology. He will be recognized for this gift at the Northland Potato Growers banquet in Grand Forks on February 17th.

Administrative Update from Lynette Flage, Associate Director NDSU Extension

Dr. Flage updated the Board on the North Dakota State University presidential search, outlining key dates for applicant review and upcoming interviews. She noted that a dedicated search website is available and includes news and updates, the search timeline, the selected search firm partner, and the names of committee members.

She also reported that NDSU Extension is currently engaged in a Civil Rights Compliance Review with USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, including updates required in response to recent federal executive orders.

Information was shared regarding the North Dakota Rural Health Transformation Program, a five-year, statewide initiative designed to strengthen rural health care systems and position North Dakota as the healthiest state in the nation. NDSU Extension, in partnership with NDSU's College of Health and Human Sciences, intends to pursue funding opportunities associated with this initiative. The program represents a total first-year investment of \$199 million to the state, focused on advancing rural health transformation efforts, strengthening rural systems of care,

improving access to high-quality services, and enhancing the integration of technology and innovation.

Dr. Flage also reported that NDSU Extension is leading searches for two State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE) positions. The first position, currently held by Julie Zikmund, who has served two terms, will come from the northeast region from one of the following counties: Rolette, Towner, Cavalier, Ramsey, Benson, Nelson, Pembina, Walsh, or Grand Forks. The second position, currently held by Pam Gulleeson, who is eligible for a second term, will come from one of the following counties: Griggs, Steele, Traill, Cass, Richland, Barnes, Ransom, Sargent, Dickey, or LaMoure.

Dr. Flage also shared that she will retire from NDSU Extension in early July after 32 years of service.

Administrative Update from Frank Casey, Associate Director of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station

Dr. Casey updated that the Bolley Laboratory construction scheduled for a May 2026 move-in for researchers and a ribbon cutting ceremony in August 2026.

He noted his developing partnerships with John Deere as one of five university strategic partners for the company. Additionally, there has been work with USDA-ARS at national, regional and state levels on building partnership across the theme of “Healthy Soils, Healthy Foods, Healthy People,” especially how it relates to the agriculture stakeholders and three ARS laboratories of North Dakota.

Comments from, Pam Gulleeson SBARE Chair

Chair Gulleeson reviewed with the board updates from the OMB meeting she attended with Dr. Lardy. She Thanked Dr. Flage for her service to Extension and noted that she will be serving on the search committee for the next Associate Director for NDS extension.

Prioritization Process

MOTION: Julie Zikmund made a motion for the ND Agriculture Experiment Station and NDSU extension proceed with a one and only top priority of operating expenses. Scott Huso seconded. Motion passed.

Carrington Research Extension Center Capital Request Review – Dr. Mike Ostlie, Director

Dr. Ostlie reviewed with the board more details about his capital request he submitted on behalf of the Carrington REC.

Strategic Planning Process Update

Drs. Lardy, Flage, and Casey reviewed with the board the current updates on the SBARE Strategic Planning Process.

MOTION: Scott Huso made a motion to approve the SBARE Strategic Planning Playbook as presented. Seconded by John Nordgaard. Motion passed

MOTION: **Scott Huso** made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Jerry Klein** seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at **1:48 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
Erin McCall