

**State Board of Agricultural Research and Education
Minutes - September 18, 2000
Seven Seas, Mandan, ND**

The State Board of Agricultural Research and Education met at 8:00 a.m., September 18, 2000, in Mandan at the Best Western Seven Seas. Members present were: Tom Archbold, Sharon Anderson, Ryan Brooks, Tim Bryan, Sylvia Daws, Jerry Doan, Neal Fisher, Cole Gustafson, Jody Hauge, George Heller, Patricia Jensen, Burdell Johnson, and Jeff Weispfenning (for Roger Johnson).

Chairman Doan called the meeting to order. The minutes of the May 1 and May 11 meetings, May 25 conference call, and August 29 livestock subcommittee meeting were approved as distributed.

Doan opened nominations for chair and vice chair of the board. Tim Bryan nominated Jerry Doan to serve as chair for the coming year. Ryan Brooks made a motion to cast a unanimous ballot for Doan. Tom Archbold seconded the motion, which passed. Ryan Brooks nominated Tim Bryan to serve as vice chair. Sylvia Daws made a motion to cast a unanimous ballot for Bryan. George Heller seconded the motion, which passed.

Doan indicated a livestock subcommittee met August 29 to review the BeefLine initiative and discuss livestock research in North Dakota. Doan suggested it would also be useful to create subcommittees for the crops area and the human development area.

Lori Capouch, administrator for the Ag Research Fund, requested approval for procedural changes to make the granting process more efficient. The requested changes were: 1) waive the August 1 date to issue the call for proposals and allow each committee to determine best call date; 2) give granting committees the option of using a one-step proposal process or a two-step proposal process; 3) limit the length of the full application to a maximum of five pages of narrative. She also requested two committee changes. Burdell Johnson made a motion to support the requests. Neal Fisher seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The board discussed the issue of hay/forage proposals submitted to the animal agriculture granting committee and the question of matching dollars for those proposals. Ryan Brooks made a motion to add a forage researcher to the committee. Patricia Jensen seconded the motion, which passed.

Sharon Anderson shared information about a new citizen's support group to act as a think tank and advocacy group for extension efforts. The group will challenge to make sure community, youth and family issues are being addressed and that current programs are on track.

Patricia Jensen indicated there will be some changes in the structure of the Veterinary and Microbiological Sciences Department, as follows:

- Vet Tech Program will move to the Animal and Range Sciences Department
- Vet Diagnostic Lab will become a free standing service unit for the state
- extension veterinarian will become a member of the Animal and Range Sciences faculty

The changes will allow these units to provide even better service to North Dakota.

Jensen announced that NDSU has received official approval from USDA to use federal funds for renovation of Robinson Hall, bringing all campus animal facilities up to federal standards. She made a motion that SBARE support use of the funds for the renovation effort. Tim Bryan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Jensen indicated that the first class of students completed the Food Safety Program in August and the evaluations were good. The teaching group is looking at opportunities for expanding the program to offer a major and also to include a distance education piece.

Jensen stated the Food Science Program has been moved solely into the College of Agriculture and is located in the Cereal Science Department. The plans are to change the name of the department to Cereal and Food Sciences, which will better define the departmental mission. There will be a search for a permanent chair.

Jensen told the SBARE that the search for a permanent chair in the Animal and Range Sciences Department is in process.

Cole Gustafson and Sharon Anderson distributed copies of a progress report on legislative initiatives from the past three bienniums and reviewed the report with board members.

Following a lunch break, the SBARE reconvened with members of the ND Livestock Endowment Foundation Research Committee speaking to the board. Jack Dahl, Gordon McLean, and Wade Moser distributed a proposal for a beef cattle initiative. They are seeking funds for the initiative and stated their purpose in attending this meeting was to solicit of support from SBARE. Discussion followed on how this proposal fits with the BeefLine initiative already developed and submitted by SBARE.

Chairman Doan stated that SBARE would like to work cooperatively with the research committee to develop a progressive livestock research program in North Dakota, but there is a process in place for evaluating and submitting budget requests. Doan asked the group to consider a scaled back version of their request, working with the Carrington Research Extension Center and SBARE.

Jack Dahl stated that the research committee was very anxious to get started with their research proposal and did not agree that BeefLine addressed their proposed needs.

Burdell Johnson requested more specific information and a more definite plan before supporting the committee's proposal.

Jody Hauge suggested the BeefLine initiative be presented at the ND Stockmen's convention the end of September.

Cole Gustafson reported that he met recently with Blaine Schatz, Paul Nyren, Kris Ringwall, Tim Faller and Greg Lardy to discuss NDSU research programs and missions, administration of the programs, locations of programs, and budget related issues. Those discussions will continue with the goal being to make livestock research in North Dakota more effective and more efficient.

Jody Hauge made a motion to support the ND Livestock Endowment Foundation Research Committee's efforts to seek extramural funding and public support for their proposed initiative. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Ryan Brooks made a motion to authorize the SBARE livestock subcommittee to send a letter to the ND Livestock Endowment Foundation Research Committee on behalf of SBARE. Tom Archbold seconded the motion, which passed.

Tom Archbold made a motion to include a copy of the ND Livestock Endowment Foundation Research Committee proposal with the September 18 meeting minutes. Neal Fisher seconded the motion, which passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

Recorded by Margaret Olson

ND Cattlemen's Beef Research Committee

The opportunity to offer a "110%" budget proposal, encompassing real growth in research spending is welcome and long overdue. Even at the 110% level, many desirable and valuable research projects cannot be funded. It should be a major goal of agricultural interests not only to accomplish this increase, but to use it as a floor to build on in future budgets. It is a tribute to the people on its farms and ranches burdened by climate and distance to market to have generated such a large portion of wealth to North Dakota's economy. North Dakota is struggling in a new world order of fitting our excess agricultural production into a global based economy.

The Beef Cattle Initiative is a well thought out and well put together document, assessing the needs and directions our North Dakota beef cattle industry must take. Three meetings of researchers, administrators and livestock producers have independently assessed all areas of production in view of our own vision of the industry's future.

The proposals fall in three general categories: (1) To get better utilization of present range and winter feed knowledge by cattle producers, particularly those producers with less than 100 beef cows who represent about ¾ of all producers and about 36% of all cows. (2) To learn more about various feeding practices and feeds which can both lower costs and boost gross returns. (3) To do genetic research and feeding trials needed to position ND producers for a revolution in beef marketing which will result in nearly all fed cattle being sold on a carcass specification basis.

As the participants in the meetings analyzed the research proposals, it became clear that the one ranked most important-preparing for the marketing revolution-would be impossible to accomplish without a method of getting all beef cattle produced in NDSU research herds finish fed under controlled conditions. Without such data, the success of genetic and management programs designed to meet various carcass grids cannot be evaluated. Nor can we determine which of the various grids may be most adaptable to ND production practices and which might be the most profitable in ND.

It also became clear that many of the proposed feeding trials; whether they were backgrounding proposals, finish feeding or feeding co-products trials, would work more successfully if we had a semi-commercial feedlot with an adequate feed mill.

Therefore, we believe that even at the expense of postponing many important new projects there is a single new one-time cost project that will improve beef cattle research for decades. That project is **the development of a modern feed mill and feedlot at the Carrington station** which can handle all large group feeding trials and which can finish all animals in NDSU beef herds. You have been given cost estimates of such a feedlot along with some preliminary design sketches.

What is missing?

1. We must adapt to the impacts of society's new environmental concerns.
2. We need scientific data to combat excessive and unwarranted regulations.

Iowa Beef Processors (IBP), the nation's largest packer which harvests 25% of all fed beef production, has announced both a new grid marketing system and a proposal to sell "case-ready" beef products. IBP states that they regard this as the most important thing in the packing industry since boxed beef. Walmart, which has a meat department in its "Super Stores", is entirely replacing meat cutting departments in each store with case-ready beef as rapidly as they can.

What this means is that ND feeder cattle producers, even as they continue to market calves off the cow or after backgrounding, will have to produce a uniform group of feeder cattle which, when fed by someone else, will meet some particular carcass criteria. Cattle feeders will be unwilling to feed commodity cattle about which they have no knowledge to a shrinking "commodity beef market" without large price discounts. It will take time, but NDSU research will be able to give cow/calf operators information which will result in the majority of their calves meeting one of several carcass grids. In this new global based economy we must fit (not force) our products to their often different standards of acceptance. To do this, NDSU will need feeding, carcass and environmental data on all of its research.

The passage of the State Meat Inspection Act should result in the development of several small packing plants selling to local consumers. A semi-commercial research feedlot can demonstrate to ND producers how to feed beef for these plants. The end seller isn't going to pass that value back unless that ranch operator can become more allied throughout the chain of production after that calf leaves the ranch. We need to document where and who adds that value.

The State Meat Inspection Act plus the proposed Carrington feedlot may provide some farmers with the incentive to develop efficient but relatively small feedlots. A few large lots may be developed. ND may never be a major cattle feeding state, most producers may continue to sell after backgrounding. However, even a small increase in cattle feeding can, for local markets, be a very important economic factor in declining rural communities.

The logical facility to carry on the study of beef's value and emerging environmental impacts is the Beef Cattle Unit of the Carrington Irrigation Research Station fulfilling both a research and education need. The original mission of the Carrington beef unit was to study how beef cattle could compliment irrigation in North Dakota. Most of the pros and cons of establishing a cow herd in an irrigated setting have been evaluated. It is time to move on.

Beef cattle ranchers have always been caring stewards of the land but now their existence is threatened by new demands. We must pick up the pace of change. We need a better database from which they may draw. Let them not drown in untested environmental demands or fail from the lack of sharing in the added value returns of their end product-beef.

The proposed feedlot will:

1. Make possible essential genetic and management research for "end use" of beef which we cannot do now.
2. Make present and proposed feeding research more effective.
3. Stimulate both beef feeding and small packer development which can have a large local impact.
4. Develop feed used for co-products of added value processing plants in the grain sector thus increasing grain returns.
5. Answer the important environmental questions for the ranchers and the general public.

At some stage in the game it will require some reinvestment. For the North Dakota beef cattle industry that time is now.