

## **NORTH DAKOTA STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION September 14, 2023, MEETING MINUTES | Minot, ND**

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The State Board of Agricultural Research and Education met for a special meeting on September 14, 2023 at the North Central Research Extension Center in Minot, ND. Present: Jim Bahm, Doug Bichler, Tom Bodine, David Cook, John Dhuyvetter, Pam Gulleeson, Larry Hoffmann, Greg Lardy, Sarah Lovas, Rep. Alisa Mitskog, John Nordgaard, and Mark Urquhart. Absent: Sen. Jerry Klein, Doug Goehring, and Julie Zikmund

Chair Lovas called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

### **Approval of June 14, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION:** Larry Hoffman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Jim Bahm second the motion. Motion passed.

### **Administrative Update from Dr. David Cook, President of North Dakota State University**

Dr. Cook shared that over 2,000 freshmen took part in walking through the gates of NDSU to begin the fall semester. He also provided updates on a range of challenges NDSU is facing. There are ongoing efforts to meet the annual enrollment goals, many focused on retention as retention rates for the freshman class are approximately 75%. Professional academic advisors have been established to assist in retaining existing and new students. Additional investments consist of the Bison Bridge Program as well as hiring more senior undergrads to serve as learning assistants. NDSU is reviewing various approaches to navigate the challenges with a student- and family-centered focus.

Dr. Cook indicated that there are efforts to collaborate with industry advisory boards to aid in identifying ways that NDSU can address North Dakota's workforce needs. With 50% of NDSU students coming from Minnesota, another challenge is the Minnesota Promise program which may recruit a specific demographic of these students to Minnesota schools. An advisory board will be formed to address this challenge.

The *Envision 2035* strategic visioning document (North Dakota University System [NDUS] in conjunction with the State Board of Higher Education [SBHE]) will provide guidance for the NDUS emphasis areas for the upcoming 10-year period. Regular meetings will be scheduled at the end of the year. President Cook and SBHE member Jeffrey Volk are co-chairing the committee on Agriculture. John Nordgaard represents SBARE and Jim Bahm represents the ND Ag Coalition on the agriculture committee.

### **Administrative Update from Greg Lardy, VP for Agricultural Affairs, Dean, Director, Director**

Dr. Lardy gave an update that enrollment in CAFSNR is down approximately 30 students from last year. He noted that the online masters for SNRS have 24 students enrolled. CAFSNR has received several significant philanthropic gifts to support various programs, scholarships, and building projects. This has been aided by the matching Challenge Grant enacted by the ND Legislature.

Dr. Lardy thanked Drs. Shana Forster and Chris Augustin for co-chairing the search committee for the Williston REC director position. Three candidates are in the interview process. Upcoming searches include the Director of Agriculture Communication and the Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources (CAFSNR). It is anticipated that both searches will launch in the spring semester.

To support CAFSNR's recruitment and retention goals, faculty fellow positions were established. Dr. Adam Marx, recruitment and retention fellow, and Dr. Danielle Condry, education initiatives fellow, are working with interim associate dean Dr. Carrie Hammer on strategic planning.

Dr. Lardy indicated that two white grape varieties were released this fall as well as a new winter wheat variety. Additionally, Dr. Heidi Pecoraro was named veterinarian of the year by the North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association.

### **Administrative Update from Lynette Flage, Associate Director, NDSU Extension**

Dr. Flage thanked the board for their participation in showing with 4-H members during the 4-H Leader's Showmanship event at the ND State Fair this year. She noted that it has been a great opportunity for the board to make connections.

Dr. Flage shared that 4-H is growing and NDSU Extension has a goal to increase participation by 25% by 2030. Since the goal was set last year there has already been a 9% membership increase, with youth enrollment in 4-H camp increasing by more than 4%. Additionally, 4-H volunteer numbers are also rising with 1,500 volunteers this year, an increase of 5.8% from last year.

Dr. Flage noted that Extension agents have been responsive to the challenges of Anthrax in the south-west and south-central areas in addition to water quality challenges due to drought conditions in many areas of the state.

She concluded that Extension has a faculty fellow working on the Next Chapter Program. The fellow will work with local school counselors to help 4-H participants prepare for college.

### **Administrative Update from Frank Casey, Associate Director, North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station (AES)**

Dr. Casey gave an update that there will be a joint job of grant coordinator opening for the Departments of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, and Animal Sciences. Two positions in Agricultural Communication will be opening to aid the AES and CAFSNR in providing visibility for research and student recruitment for undergraduate and graduate degrees. A third position was approved for Ag Comm to help with network security throughout the NDAES.

Dr. Casey concluded that graduate enrollment is up and that there have been updates to the graduate tuition waiver policies.

### **Comments from Sarah Lovas, SBARE Chair**

Chair Lovas thanked the REC directors for hosting field days events and the NCREC for hosting SBARE's first input session. She then welcomed new member Scott Ouradnik. The board was

oriented on receiving stakeholder input and discussed the prioritization process. She announced that receiving of input will close on January 3, 2024.

She concluded by thanking the board members who were able to attend the showmanship event at the North Dakota State Fair.

### **Outgoing Member Dean Wehri**

Chair Lovas acknowledged and thanked the outgoing member Dean Wehri. He was presented with a bison statue for his eight years of service.

### **Capital Construction Projects Update**

Dr. Lardy reviewed a list of capital improvement projects linked [here](#).

Dr. Lardy noted some construction and bidding challenges on a variety of the projects. The Peltier Complex has windows, but is in need of a large enough crew to complete the masonry work. The Ag Field Lab project (Waldron Hall replacement) is looking to bid in spring to begin a 24-month construction timeline with ongoing fund raising.

### **Testimony:**

- Langdon Research Extension Center Seed Plant – Chad Anderson, NDCISA
- Salted Lands Council – Fintan Dooley
- Carrington Research Extension Center – Mike Ostlie
- Souris Valley Vineyard and Pointe of View Winery – Jeff Peterson

### **Update on SBARE Initiatives Funded in 2023**

Dr. Lardy gave updates on the initiatives funded for AES not covered in the capital projects updates. He shared that the Dickinson REC agronomist search committee has been formed and will be interviewing in six weeks. A club root technician, Larissa Jennings, was hired at the Langdon REC this August. Appropriated funding to support operating costs of the Oakes Irrigation Research Site has been allocated to the Carrington REC. Additional funding includes support to NDAWN to aid the cellular bandwidth, support to hire a potato breeder, and deferred maintenance funds to main campus and RECs. He concluded that the Hettinger REC will finalize their land purchase by March.

Dr. Flage gave updates on the initiatives funded for Extension. She shared that Extension is expecting to hire a swine specialist and a soybean specialist soon. She reported that operating funds for 4-H and the Farm and Ranch Safety have had a high impact on the success of the programs. One example is the purchase of a tractor simulator. She noted the success of Adriana Drusini, Extension Program Coordinator, Farm and Ranch Stress, in her initiative-funded position. Operating funds from the State Soil Conservation Committee have been allocated to the local soil conservation districts. She concluded that there have been new policies put into place for reallocating of funds, and explained that funds allocated for salaries are unable to be allocated anywhere other than salaries.

## **FARMS Grant**

Drs. Casey and Flage shared that the regional collaborative partnership known as FARMS (Northern Plains AgTech Engine for **F**ood systems **A**dapted for **R**esiliency and **M**aximized **S**ecurity) has reached the final state of a nationwide competition that will provide winning teams with \$160 million funding over 10 years. Several visits are planned for the review committee to come to NDSU and Grand Farm in the next week. NDSU is the only finalist that has a focus in agriculture and that has a tribal component. Winning teams are expected to be announced this winter. Drs. Casey and Flage expressed their thanks and appreciation to Dr. Colleen Fitzgerald, NDSU VP for Research and Creative Activity, and her team for spearheading the project.

## **North Central Research Extension Center Update**

Dr. Shana Forster gave an update to the board on the North Central Research Extension Center. She shared that it had been a dry season with average yields and that biggest issue being weed control. She announced that there are currently openings for a soil health specialist and livestock specialists within the Center. She concluded that the foundation seed program has harvest they will begin processing.

## **Regional Extension Update**

Brian Jenks, Weed Scientist at NCREC, presented to the board on weed control research updates.

James Roger, Forage Crops Production Specialist at NCREC, presented to the board on the Extension forage program updates.

Emily How, Ward County Horticultural Agent, presented to the board on the horticulture Extension updates.

Karla Meikle, 4-H Activities Coordinator, presented to the board on North Dakota 4-H Camp updates.

**MOTION:** Jim Bahm made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Scott Ouradnik. Meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Erin McCall