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**SBARE Testimony – December 4, 2019
North Dakota Heritage Center**

The North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) appreciates and values our close working relationship with SBARE, NDSU and the NDSU Extension Service. NDSC funds over a million dollars of research and educational programs annually at NDSU and the NDSU Extension service. The efforts of SBARE, NDSU, NDSU Extension Service and NDSC support soybean production in North Dakota. The soybean crop in North Dakota carries an annual economic value of \$2 billion dollars, second only to oil in North Dakota exports.

The following are priorities the NDSC would ask SBARE to consider in their next biennium funding that would have a positive impact on ND soybean producers state-wide.

Researcher and Technician for Resistant and Invasive Weed Research and Outreach

- Support a research specialist and a technician to provide ND farmers research-based recommendations to control herbicide resistant and invasive weeds.
- Resistant weed control and invasive weeds, including Palmer amaranth, are impacting yields and increasing weed control costs for ND farmers. Weed seeds in exported grain is hindering market access for ND agriculture products.

Technical Support for NDSU Soybean Breeding Program

- NDSC has long been the main funder of the NDSU Soybean Breeding Program. The current breeder, Dr. Ted Helms is set to retire in 2020. We would support a fully funded technician to support the new Soybean Breeder to ensure the program continues successfully for ND soybean producers.
- The Soybean Breeding program is key to the economic success of ND farmers who chose to plant soybeans. Soybeans is a driver of the ag economy for ND, and technical support is critical to the efficiency and success of research, variety development, and operating a large and important breeding program

Agricultural Economic/Farm Transition Specialist and Technician

- Support an Agribusiness/Ag Economist Specialist and Technician located off the main campus to help farmers manage risk in times of low agricultural commodity prices and reduced international market access. Areas of assistance could include farm budgets, marketing, finance, risk management, succession planning and more
- Support a Center for Excellence, funding a director position for Farm Ownership, Transition and Intensive Management for ND to lead the nation in these topics, helping ensure ND farm and ranch families and the agriculture economy remain profitable and sustainable for future generations.

Extension Livestock Specialist(s)

- Agriculture diversity and the inclusion of livestock is important to farmers to help stabilize income, utilize feed grains grown in ND, and utilize marginal land not suited to crop production. All of ND agriculture would benefit from growth of the livestock production across North Dakota.

- Support a full-time specialist and technician at the North Central Research Extension Center in Minot to help support growth in this area of the ND economy.

NDAWN (North Dakota Agriculture Weather Network) Technicians (3)

- NDAWN is very important to ND crop production and provides ND producers a unique advantage in farm and ranch management. The computer system currently in place is outdated and jeopardizes the safety and integrity of the network, sustainability of data and data security.
- Support three technicians to develop an up-to-date program to increase efficiency and ensure the system will serve the farmers of ND for a long time.

New Field Crops Research Facility to Replace Waldron Hall

- NDSU Waldron Hall has served ND agriculture well but is no longer adequate to house field laboratories and breeding programs. Because agriculture is a highly technical industry, technical laboratories and facilities are essential to the future success of the agriculture industry.
- Having updated facilities and lab space helps NDSU retain qualified and talented researchers and support technicians to ensure longevity of success and to keep ND as a national leader of research and technology for agriculture.
- Support a new field crops research facility at NDSU to replace Waldron Hall.

Ag Products Development Center at NDSU

- Harris Hall and the Meats Research Laboratory are outdated and cannot support the research of a top-tier land-grant research university.
- Analytical laboratories capable of supporting research in food science, meat science, food safety, nutrition and consumer sensory traits would support the development of new agricultural products, and open new markets for ND commodities.
- Support for the building of the new Agriculture Products Development Center at NDSU.

Water Quality Specialists and Operational Support

- Water nutrient management is a national priority and increased scrutiny of agricultural use of water is a reality. Research-based information is needed so informed decisions can be made to help keep ND farmers and ranchers sustainable on their operations
- Support for a Water Quality Specialist and a technician to help farmers and ranchers in water management on their operations.

Precision Agriculture Technical Support

- Precision agriculture is very important to the future of agriculture, as farmers and researchers are collecting huge amounts of data each year. The amount of data collected is so large, much of the data is not being utilized.
- Support for programs and informaticists to help manage and analyze data, which will allow researchers and farmers to organize information to make informed decisions.

Rural access to mental health support

- Low commodity prices, a bad growing season and harvest difficulties have created the perfect storm for high stress.
- Suicide, domestic violence, and destructive behavior all increase in high stress situations. Easy access to mental health professionals and education can save lives and families

Please contact NDSC any time for further information or clarification on any of these priorities.

A sincere thank you for taking these priorities into your consideration. The NDSC is appreciative of the work and support that SBARE provides to the viability of North Dakota soybean producers.