

*Good morning – NDSU State Board of Agriculture Research Committee Members (Dec. 7, 2021, in Dickinson)*

My name is Becky Peterson. I am representing the ND 4-H Foundation as a 6-year board member with my testimony today. I am also the Director of Marketing and Services for Farm Credit Services of Mandan and prior to that worked for John Deere as a Company rep. I truly bleed green . . . and gold if you throw in my education from NDSU – Go Bison. (Degree in Ag Economics and Communications).

I grew up on a cattle ranch near Velva called Effertz Key Ranch with 12 brothers and sisters all of whom were involved in 4-H including my parents who were leaders at one time. My four children have also been very active in 4-H. In 2017, the Effertz family received the ND 4-H Foundations Century Family Award with **142** years of 4-H involvement. This year the ND 4-H Foundation gave out Century Family Awards to 6 more families. This award is a true testament of the longevity of this organization in North Dakota and one I am proud to represent.

With all the negativity in the environment today it's been said to follow the **money** to find the source of the evil doings. Well with 4-H it is the opposite – to find the root of all the positivity follow the many unpaid volunteers and resourceful agents and you will see the true passion and value of 4-H. **We are rich in life skills, learning experiences and positive values.** There are statistics to back this opinion.

Annually, nearly 25,000 North Dakota youth participate in a 4-H program, activity, or special event. Thanks to generous financial support and to the thousands of service hours donated by over 2,300 adult volunteer leaders, 4-H programming continues to positively impact the youth of North Dakota, helping them be the very best they can be. The 4H programming support comes from the Foundation and is a priority for our limited resources.

North Dakota 4-H youth are: 2 times more likely to participate in science, 2 times more likely to make healthier choices, 2 times more likely to be civically active and 4 times more likely to make contributions to their communities. In addition, the leadership and communication skills 4-Hers learn by doing gives them essential workforce readiness skills.

In addition to being rich in values, skills and experiences, ND 4-H Foundation is also asset rich. The North Dakota 4-H Camp is on 80 acres of wooded riverfront property 1.5 miles west of Washburn, N.D., and has provided camping to thousands of youths for 55 years. With the help of some very key donors, we have invested over \$2 million in infrastructure improvements and the camp is now an outdoor showcase everyone should experience. (Please plan to have an SBARE meeting there soon.) Due to another generous donor, plans are to add a fishing and swimming recreational pond along with a ropes course. These major improvements open the door to the public for year-round use such as conferences, seminars, retreats and

reunions. We have also been gifted 80 acres of rangeland near Gladstone from the Dale and Tammy Luhman estate. It has potential for 4-H and agriculture education activities to be held there along with the current grazing contract.

The 4H pledge is to put your head, heart, hands, and health to better use. Our volunteers and agents have put their time, talent, and tenacity into 4-H. However, we have had a lot of volunteers and extension agents retire after many years of service to 4-H. These departures are adding to our resource shortage and workforce void which brings me to our request of SBARE. **We need more financial resources to manage our assets and passion for long term sustainability and growth.**

The values instilled in 4-H experiences have built an incredible foundation to build upon. Those values could be leveraged with the right management to project North Dakota and the Ag Industry meaningfully forward.

The vast learning opportunities in 4-H create organizational challenges much like the farmers and ranchers our county extension offices serve. Each county has its unique production practices to manage and with specialized labor you have been able to focus on unique strengths our state brings to the industry. Likewise, 4-H has been able to diversify its portfolio to include new STEM and robotics activities that brings in a new set of students ready to try hands on learning they don't always get in school. However, this inclusive mission takes a strong, steady, and diverse workforce to accomplish.

North Dakota 4-H is a program that is available to all youth, offering meaningful leadership opportunities in every county. Research illustrates participation in high quality 4-H programs increases thriving youth, and thriving youth achieve important developmental outcomes, such as academic success and vocational success.

North Dakota 4-H Mission: North Dakota 4-H positive youth development creates active learning environments through youth-adult partnerships, empowering youth to thrive as productive, confident, contributing, and caring citizens.

In support of this mission, NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development programs will:

- Include all segments of our diverse population
- Provide hands-on learning experiences
- Develop life skills and character traits
- Foster leadership and volunteerism in youth and adults
- Strengthen families and communities through relationships
- Use science and research-based knowledge as a basis for programming
- Build internal and external partnerships to support programming efforts and to create collaborative relationships

Thank you so much for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

# I Love 4-H

By Hannah Peterson

I think we should have 4-H. If you love animals you should join 4-H. You can show pigs, horses, cows, bunnies, any kind of farming bird, goats, and sheep. I love animals I also love raising them. All you need for 4-H is an animal, food, water, and a cage.

The main reason I want people to join 4-H, is because, you can build things you've never built before, and you also get ribbons.

Another reason is you get to camp there for two days. You get to do fun things like play with your animals, and there's lunch there too.

The last reason is you can learn about nature. Nature is a life time experience.

You could get outside and smell the fresh air.

So please join 4-H! You can do things you've never done before, you get to camp there for two days, you can have a good experience at nature.

## Comments:

Strengths: 4-H used to be thought of as just a country-birds club, but that has changed. You should really invest about 4-H and convincing. Perfect every-grant record.

Improvement suggestions:

Letter grade \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_