



North Dakota Corn Grower Association
Testimony before the State Board of Agriculture Research and
Education
November 2, 2021

Thank you Chair Lovas and members of the State Board of Agriculture Research and Education for the opportunity for the North Dakota Corn Growers Association to share our perspective on the state's research and educational needs for the future, especially in planning for a 2021 special session this month and for the 2023 regular legislative session.

For the record, my name is Brenda Elmer, Executive Director of the North Dakota Corn Growers Association (NDCGA). We are the advocacy arm of North Dakota corn at the grass roots level and serve as the voice of the more than 13,000 corn growers across the state.

Our board has identified the expansion of livestock and related operations in the state as a top priority as it relates to value-add agriculture. One key research and education resource that strengthens this objective is the Carrington Research Extension Center. There is important work at the Carrington REC to advance beef feedlot research and evaluation; including research on nutrition and extreme weather, technology investments, and resources to improve employee retention there. Addressing these needs is key to help the livestock industry to rebound from the drought and to expand animal agriculture in the state.

Many of our growers and their families use extension programs throughout the state, and our next generation of farmers are often found in 4-H. This is an incredibly valuable education program for agriculture with a high return on investment. We support continued funding of extension and 4-H in the state, and like the idea of expanded engagement between 4-H and our state producers, and linking 4-H ultimately with future workforce.

We also support efforts and funding to advance other value-added agriculture endeavors. The gold standard is the state's ethanol industry which has taken corn production demand to a new level. North Dakota ethanol production exceeds 500 million gallons per year, with an economic contribution of \$623 million. This significant, positive impact to agriculture during the last two decades, has helped to build an industry critical for our corn farmers as ethanol grinds half of North Dakota corn.

Corn growers in the state also look to new uses of corn and the research that can help spur the next ethanol.

Funding for soil health advancements is also important to our growers. As the world demands for our ag products increase, we continue to produce more on our same fields. Soil health is increasingly important for the sustainability of our industry.

As an organization that works with policy makers, we also want to convey that the work that NDSU's Center for Agriculture Policy and Trade Studies (CAPTS) has done towards building an overall farm model for the state, will be very helpful as the federal Farm Bill begins to be developed. Funding to help its work continue is important.

And finally, I want to conclude with a thank you to SBARE and our state's ag research and education partners for the investments in advancing North Dakota agriculture. We have our challenges in the state and opportunities too and having the resources to address them makes all the difference. I invite all of us involved to work to improve on the delivery of those results to the grower so they can apply it in their farming operation. All the research and education available does little good if the ultimate customer doesn't know of it or deems it too complex use it.

We thank you for asking for our input, for your public service, and for looking out for the future of agriculture in the state. We welcome the opportunity to work together in these efforts.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I stand for any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Brenda Elmer
Executive Director
North Dakota Corn Growers Association (NDCGA)