

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE >> CHANGING LIVES

Growing a Stronger Workforce

NDSU Extension Strengthens Communities

The U.S. is facing a workforce crisis, North Dakota is no exception. Technical skills combined with teamwork, decision-making, critical thinking and communication can help build a strong and effective workforce for the state. Our state has a high demand for individuals with strong science, technology, engineering, math and entrepreneurial skills. Expanding and developing quality programs for our diverse population to support these skills is essential for North Dakota’s natural resource-based economy of agriculture and energy.

Rural communities also need to mentor and retain our current and future workforce to flourish. Succession plans are critical as businesses transition through changes in ownership. Retention allows workers and families to remain in rural communities across our state to thrive.

>> OUR REQUEST

- Support for 4-H youth development programs that will advance North Dakota’s future workforce, growing leaders through club involvement, year-round camping opportunities, school enrichment, and after-school programs to promote youth who thrive with workforce readiness skills.
- Support for expanded engagement with North Dakota producers, small business owners, and rural communities to assist with workforce development and provide succession planning education.

Quick Facts

- ✔ 4-H youth development cultivates an environment for young people to thrive and develop skills essential for employability. (Thrive Model, 2021)
- ✔ Research indicates the 4-H camping experience provides essential workforce readiness skills. (Wilson and Sibhorp, 2018)
- ✔ 42.4% of employers rate the overall preparation of workers who graduated from high school as deficient in basic skills. (Casner-Lotto & Wright Benner, 2006)
- ✔ Only 40% of small business owners have a business succession plan in place. (Above the Canopy, n.d.)

Increasing Food Security and Prosperity

NDSU Extension Adds Value to Locally Grown Food Products

Agriculture continues to be a cornerstone of North Dakota’s economy in both rural and urban communities. With the introduction of new agriculture products processing within North Dakota, there is a need for a continued focus on the food supply chain. Support for food processing efforts and activities, particularly for value-added food products, can enhance nutrient dense foods. Advancements in technology create opportunities for our state, but it also creates vulnerabilities in agriculture production and processing. Recently agriculture processing has faced cyberattacks, which threaten the food supply chain.

The increased interest in locally-produced, sustainable food, the increase in people’s time at home during the COVID-19 pandemic and an overall increased popularity in growing and maintaining plants and trees has increased people’s interest in horticulture. This has created a situation where current county-based Extension ANR agents are being pulled away from providing direct support to production agriculture in some of our largest agriculture producing counties.

>> OUR REQUEST

- Support to ensure a safe and nutritious food supply through utilization of new agricultural products for human consumption.
- Support for a secure food-supply chain.
- Support for agriculture production development for small businesses.
- Support for additional horticulture expertise in our growing urban areas.

Quick Facts

- ✔ 10.5% of households in the U.S. are food insecure. (USDA, 2020)
- ✔ Food technology can help provide basic and extra food choices to vulnerable populations. (Andrade, 2019)
- ✔ Ransomware attacks affect the food supply chain. JBS was forced to halt production in 13 meat processing plants and paid \$11M to hackers. (Myers, 2021)
- ✔ In 2020, Cass County Master Gardeners collected 14,032 lbs of fresh produce for food pantries. (NDSU Extension, 2020)

Expanding and Protecting Livestock

NDSU Extension Promotes Sustainable Animal Agriculture

Livestock production in North Dakota accounts for approximately \$1.5B in gross revenue annually. The health of livestock is imperative to the state's economy. Our recent experience with the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the need for real-time data. Timely analysis is vital to effectively deal with infectious and emerging diseases. The NDSU Senator Bill Bowman Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) is state-of-the-art, and the faculty and staff that provide support within the VDL are superlative. The VDL generates field-derived data by the minute.

North Dakota lags its neighboring states in livestock production. Livestock integration has been identified as a top priority for utilizing and adding value to North Dakota agriculture products.

» OUR REQUEST

- Support for Extension veterinary epidemiology at the Bowman VDL. This additional support will assist with data analysis, interpret findings, create timely and informative health messages and create evidence-based Extension animal health programs.
- Support for integrated livestock management at NDSU Research and Extension Centers.

Quick Facts

- ✓ In 2020, Bowman VDL received 12,858 cases, with 45,582 diagnostic requests, yielding 131,609 results. (Bowman Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, 2021)
- ✓ North Dakota ranks 34th in animal and animal product receipts and 10th in crop production. (USDA, 2020)

Building Resilient Communities and People

NDSU Extension Empowers Citizens to be Healthy and Safe

Extension is focused on prevention, not intervention. North Dakotans have a passion for the wellness of their crops and livestock. However, they may not exhibit the same devotion for their own wellness. Resilience is the ability to adapt to difficult situations. When stress, adversity or trauma occur, having these skills will allow for individuals and communities to continue to function. Prevention efforts help build coping skills that can reduce the need for expensive, crisis-level services.

Farmers and ranchers regularly experience uncertainties throughout the year. These can be related to extreme weather, fluctuating commodity prices or trade disruptions. Extension is in a unique position to coordinate efforts related to farm/ranch stress.

Rural communities have a limited number of mental health providers. In North Dakota, there is only one provider for every 3,208 people. Farmers and ranchers are concerned that mental health professional do not understand the needs or problems they face. The relationships local Extension agents have with the public can be an advantage in reaching specific populations.

» OUR REQUEST

- Support to train community members on recognizing signs of mental health issues and how to make referrals to behavioral health services offered across the state.
- Support to develop youth and adult resiliency programming.

Quick Facts

- ✓ The farmer and rancher suicide rate, on average, is 3.5 times higher than that of the general population. (Wedell & Sherman, 2020)
- ✓ In North Dakota, suicide is the third-leading cause of death among 10- to 14-year-olds and 15- to 24-year-olds. It is the second for ages 12-18 and 25-34. (United Health Foundation, 2020)
- ✓ The animal-human bond is a dynamic relationship shown to be essential to therapeutic wellness, behavioral patterns in youth, and a key tool for assisted learning. (Urichulc and Anderson, 2003; White-Lewis, 2020; Hrcklin and Piazza, 2018)

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