

Commodity Election Video Information

What are Commodity Elections?

North Dakota law authorizes producers of agricultural commodities to establish councils to support their specific industry. The councils are allowed to levy an assessment also known as a checkoff fee on producers and use the proceeds to fund research and promotion of the commodity.

The commodity councils are managed by a board of producers for that commodity. Counties are split into districts determined by the council. County representatives are elected by all county producers. District representatives are elected by the county representatives in the district.

Why is NDSU Extension involved in these elections?

The NDSU Extension Service is **required by the North Dakota Century Code** to conduct elections for the;

1. North Dakota Barley Council,
2. North Dakota Corn Council,
3. North Dakota Dry Pea and Lentil Council,
4. North Dakota Oilseed Council,
5. North Dakota Soybean Council, and the
6. North Dakota Wheat Commission

Each commodity requires an election to be held in each county for the county representative positions. The elections are based on a 3 or 4 year rotation depending on the commodity.

NDSU Extension County ANR agents are tasked with coordinating these elections. Elections can be held in conjunction with an event such as a county crop improvement day or as a separate meeting. Multiple elections can be held during the same event.

Planning and officiating these elections provide the county ANR agent a great opportunity to meet and form a working relationship with the producers in the county. Providing a well-run election and event can help agents become a recognized and knowledgeable resource to area producers.

How are county elections planned?

Emails are sent out in November to counties required to hold elections for the next year. Some commodities allow elections to be held as early as December while others require a January 1st or later date. The emails will be sent by the ANR Program Leaders office except for the soybean election information which will be sent from the ND Soybean Council office*.

Once the agent receives the email, they are asked to set the date, time, location, and address for the election and send the information to the ANR Program Leader's office. The earlier, the better. An email is then sent to the agent with the newspaper ads, news release, ballots, and certificate for the election. Newspaper ads can be sent to the local newspaper. Publication dates are provided at the top of the ads.

A copy of the certificate is mailed or emailed to the ANR Program Leader's office after the election. Ballots should remain in the county office until the next election for that commodity.

*Soybean elections are the only commodity election held by mail-in ballots. The ND Soybean Council office takes care of all nomination and ballot mailings for the county elections. The agent's role is to collect the nominations through the mail and provide the names to the soybean office. The ballots will also be sent to the agent's office and the agent will be required to provide the name of the winner to the soybean office by a certain date.

An agent in the commodity district is chosen by the ANR Program Leader, Commodity Council and District Directors to officiate the district election. These elections are planned with the help of the commodity offices and are run similarly to the county elections.

What are county representative duties?

County representatives represent the producers in the counties where they live. Their role is to serve as a liaison between the producers and the council. This enables the county representative to:

- influence how the checkoff dollars are invested,
- influence the industry's direction,
- expand their network of fellow producers, leaders and key influencers in the industry, and
- increase their industry knowledge.

What are district representative duties?

District representatives represent their district at the council/commission meetings. Their duties include:

- voting on use of check off money,
- participating as a voting member of the state commodity board
- attending board and committee meetings,
- selecting and evaluating the administrator,
- evaluating and reviewing commission operations,
- monitoring and participating in issues impacting the council/commission, and
- approving, establishing, prioritizing and evaluating the programs and services of the organization.

Talking to your producers about the commodities

As stated earlier, NDSU Extension is required by North Dakota Century Code to conduct elections for commodity councils. But it doesn't end there. Extension agents' work with the commodities is beneficial to their programming and helpful when identifying crop production needs.

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