

SBARE Stakeholder Comments

Good afternoon Ladies and gentlemen, Thank you for inviting Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society and me to address research issues affecting renewable agriculture. As a past member of this committee I understand the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. With that said, those in leadership roles, need to have a vision of what the many will need in the future.

Organic and renewable production are a small but growing part of ND agriculture. You may not be aware of work that has been done so far.

Starting in the late 1990's, Dr. Pat Carr started with on farm organic variety trials in various small grains. By 2007 he established formal organic program at Dickenson Research and Education Center. The program had grown to 26 ac. Certified organic and a 35% research specialist. Since then 10 acres have been lost to oil exploration, and there no longer is a specialist helping. Work at Dickenson has included No-till organic work, organic herbicide screening, effective crop rotations in dry climates for building soil health. In 2016 12-15 studies are scheduled.

At about the same time (1999), Steve Zwinger at the Carrington Research and Education Center started with on farm variety studies. In 2005 trials were started on the station with organic potatoes, both irrigated and dry land testing rotations and fingerling varieties. Other studies: Cover crops have been evaluated with 4 non-typical plant species (cowpea, winter pea, forage radish, and Hairy Vetch. Rodale institute also cooperated with a 5 year cover crop roller concept study.

Our biggest project, Ancient grains; which include Spelt, Emmer and Einkorn, has lead to a working relationship with Cornell University evaluation 100 lines of Einkorn over the last 5 years down to 5 for not only agronomic characteristics, but also milling and baking qualities. We are currently engaged with artisan bakers that are working with flour samples to evaluate taste and baking. Newly added is an Oat variety evaluation sponsored by General Mills. All brought to CREC because of the work done with emmer and einkorn.

Lastly Gretta Graming has recently started cover crop work for vegetable production at the Absaraka station.

Other studies not being done organically include white sorghum as a flour substitute, and vegetable variety taste and marketability trials in 5 locations across the state and cooperators in SD and MT.

In the beginning research was self funded by the producers themselves, but now funding comes from many sources including SARE, CERES, FARRMS, OREI, USDA specialty crop grant, OFRF, Cliff Bar and General Mills. Precious little has come from state funds.

In comparison since 1988, U of MN has 120 acre certified organic research farm next to the Lambert station, with 3 certified organic high tunnels. IA State started the Neely-Kinyon

Research farm in 1998. Here they have been able to do long term side by side comparisons of conventional and organic production, and how it affects soil health. We have nothing like this in ND, monitoring and evaluating how different cropping methods affect soil health.

Most, if not all renewable/organic farming research is adaptable to a "modern" conventional farming. The reverse cannot be said of research done in the conventional world.

Earlier this week Jim Crammer of "Mad Money" had the CEO of White Wave food company on his show. White Wave is an innovative food company that specializes in making alternative food choices mainstream with brands like Horizon dairy, Silk, Vega, and Earthbound Farm. At the end of the segment Mr. Crammer advised investors that White Wave represents the future of food trends, and recommended the stock as an investment. This suggest to me that market analyzers see demand will continue to grow for products derived from renewable/organic methods.

If NDSU wants to be a player in this future, I would suggest SBARE prioritize an organic research specialist at Dickenson and Carrington to enable these programs to grow and develop more long term information. Along with the research specialists, Extension Value Added Cropping Specialists should be added on a state wide basis to help communicate the research and explain the growing market opportunities to ND growers and consumers.

Thank you for your time and considerations of these positions.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Edmund Berger". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the main body of text.