January 7th, 2018

To: ND State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE)

It is with great pleasure to compose this letter of support for our local FCW (family and community wellness) agents in our communities. I am a nurse and work in a Rural Health Clinic in Milnor and my husband and I farm along with our sons.

Our three sons were all involved in the local 4H and my husband was a leader for many years. I utilized our local extension office A LOT when we were in 4H. I utilized the services that the extension office had to offer many years after our children were out of 4H. These programs and agents are valuable resources and tools for the community.

My husband and I were the recipients of the Harvest Bowl award through NDSU one year. That was a great honor.

Our son gave us one of the best Christmas gifts ever. He paid for our enrollment into the Design your Succession Plan program. My husbands brother had retired from farming earlier than expected and there were some family struggles. This course was EXACTLY what we needed to help us plan for the future of transitioning out of the family farm. We loved the course and it was a great tool for us to start thinking of the future. The course was very well outlined and presented in a way that was easy to follow. The agents did a wonderful job. We plan to attend another session for a refresher course sometime in the future.

I would love to see some other programs available on information about planning for retirement. Some basics on Estate planning, life insurance, understanding Medicare, Medicare Drug Plans. We NEED a community resource person to help the elderly with understanding the different drug plans. I see patients that can’t afford their medications and they don’t change drug plans because they do not understand the programs, therefore they remain on the same program and are paying way too much for their medications. Some basic parenting classes, babysitting classes, and when is it safe to start leaving your children home alone classes are just a few I can think of that could be offered.

In closing, I urge the committee to give very careful consideration prior to cutting any adult or community wellness programs currently provided. Please reconsider, the need is out there.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindy Spellerberg