North Dakota State Board of Agricultural Research and Education,

We would like to take the opportunity to express our strong advocacy for a county-based NDSU Extension program. It is our belief that a county presence is what continues to set NDSU Extension apart from other state Extension programs.

We understand that Extension Agents wear many hats during their day-to-day responsibilities. These hats vary from county to county to better meet the needs of each county. We cannot have a one size fits all system. We need to go past geography and population limitations and do what serves the taxpayers in each county best. In Wells County we know what is best for our taxpayers is to maintain an Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent. Our ANR Agent does her best to always provide a balanced array of programs varying from soil health and agronomy, succession planning, livestock production, youth outreach with 4-H and in the schools.

Rural areas have a need for local resources as much or possibly more than areas with a large population base. If you take away the local Extension Office as a resource you are jeopardizing NDSU’s contact with North Dakota citizens. Providing unbiased and researched based information is still very much needed even in the technology era we are living in. Person to person contact should not be replaced in this scenario.

We feel that the proposed percentage changes regarding compensation are likely doable. However, we do want to stress that we are not ok with continually cutting budgets at the state level and having counties pick up the difference with property tax raises.

We know that the county-based NDSU Extension program works and support continuing that service for our residents. We know change is inevitable but we ask that you think long and hard before getting rid of a system and service that other states and counties envy.

We ask that you recommend to the Legislature and Governor to maintain an investment in our rural communities and counties through a county-based Extension Program.

Wells County Commissioners
Mary Hager, Chairperson
Randi Suckut, Vice Chairman
Dennis Dockter
Stan Buxa
Danny (Boone) Maxwell