



**TESTIMONY OF NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS UNION
BEFORE THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE BOARD OF
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION
NOVEMBER 30, 2017**

My name is Mark Watne and I'm here to represent the members of North Dakota Farmers Union. I'm here to support North Dakota State University Extension Service, and the work they do for rural North Dakota.

The U.S. family farm and ranch model of agriculture production is the greatest in the world and we should positively promote it as such. Other nations study this concept and try to copy it frequently. U.S. consumers and citizens reap the benefits of this system, and we should never risk dramatic changes that would disrupt its success.

Our family farm and ranch operations do have a support system that at times is taken for granted. Our land grant universities, public research and Extension are assets that should be expanded to continue to give us the tools necessary to sustain our agricultural advantage and to strive to enhance farm and ranch income.

There is not an industry in existence that has failed to benefit from research, extension and investment of dollars to pursue the food production excellence necessary to better society. Dollars spent on public agriculture research and Extension turn over in the economy. This is essential to the success of rural communities and agriculture production that supports them.

We currently are in a time of low or no profit potential in farming and ranching. Now is really the time to expand research dollars. Strong successful businesses do not stop or reduce research for their products and services during low income periods. In fact, many find it is the perfect time to reinvest to become stronger and more resilient to the whims of the marketplace.

Public research, education and Extension are the tools that keep private research disciplined and less self-serving. It is the baseline to keep research in a competitive mode and not misguided to the interests of private dollars paying for the study.

A recent article about the Netherlands highlights this tiny country that feeds the world. It is the second largest exporter of food in value to the U.S. The country is one tenth the size of the U.S. with a climate similar to the Upper Great Plains. The formula for their success is research, education and extension dollars spent to develop their industry. Maybe this is North Dakota's path to regenerating our successful family farm and agriculture industry?

Public research, education and Extension are essential to the challenges facing family farms and ranches. North Dakota's long standing economic engine is at risk. It is only our limited vision that suggests less public dollars for these programs is a strategy to maintain our status as the greatest ag production system in the world.

UNION FARMER

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**SCHRIEFER: NDSU EXTENSION SERVICE STAYS
PROACTIVE IN HELPING FARMERS, RANCHERS**



DECEMBER 2017