Departmental Highlights

- Enrollment in our three undergraduate majors (Animal Science, Veterinary Technology and Equine Science) is at 420 students this fall. Graduate enrollment is down slightly, reflecting a difficult grant funding environment and lower faculty numbers due to budget cuts.

- Our meat science research program is benefitting from the new state beef checkoff, with several hundred thousand dollars of research funded this past year.

- Our Extension specialists continue to be focused on delivering high-impact programs. Specialists from the Animal Sciences Department led NDSU Extension's drought education program efforts this past summer, coordinating educational program responses, responding to producer questions and working with multiple agencies to assist producers.

- The NDSU BBQ Boot Camp program partnered with NDSU Athletics to conduct tailgating events at the home football games this fall. Our commodity groups' strong interest in sponsoring events associated with tailgating continues to be a highlight for the department.

- Our Moos, Ewes & More program continues to be very popular with the public. This past October, nearly 1,100 people attended our departmental open house.

Legislative Update

- The department implemented several budget cuts related to the 2017 legislative session, including reducing the number of faculty and staff FTEs, as well as moving portions of technician salaries onto grant and income funds.

Industry Status

- **Opportunities:** Continued interest in growing all segments of the livestock industry. Neighboring states (Minnesota, Montana and South Dakota) all have more balanced portfolios of crop and livestock industry cash receipts (Figure 1). Opportunities for growth exist in multiple livestock industries.

  - Growth in milk processing capacity in neighboring states along the I-29 corridor has increased opportunities for dairy development, especially in areas near the I-29 corridor as feed resources and access to milk processing capacity are competitive advantages.

  - Interest in swine industry expansion also exists. Competitive advantages include access to feed resources and enhanced biosecurity. With plenty of wide open spaces and relatively low hog numbers, the state is poised to see growth in farrowing operations.

  - A new packing plant in Aberdeen, S.D., is opening additional markets for fed cattle for North Dakota feedlots.

  - Several commodity groups have formed the North Dakota Livestock Alliance. The NDLA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that assists farmers, ranchers and communities with the development or expansion of the livestock industry.

  - Enhanced livestock development is an area of economic opportunity for North Dakota. We have tremendous room to grow the livestock industry. Our ability to serve these industries is hampered by our lack of research and extension presence in swine and dairy cattle.
Capital Improvement Needs

- **Meats Laboratory**: The current Meats Laboratory was built in the 1950s and no longer serves the needs of modern meat science research. Annual repair and maintenance costs in the current facility continue to grow. Additionally, we continue to struggle to meet the requirements of U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection with the current facility. A new facility is necessary because opportunities to grow our livestock industries in the state are tied to knowledge of the end product and how that product meets the needs of national and international consumers.

Research Needs

- The AgriBiome is an emerging area of research that encompasses many disciplines and aspects related to livestock production, veterinary medicine and animal sciences. The department supports this multidisciplinary research effort.

Extension Needs

- Our ability to serve the swine and dairy industries in the state has been severely impacted by the budget cuts implemented as a result of the 2017 legislative session.

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*A Dorset ewe lamb at our Moos, Ewes & More event.*

Photo Credit: Rex Sun

*Austen Germolius, NDSU Meat Science Laboratory Manager, discusses lamb carcass fabrication and processing.*

Photo Credit: Heidi R. Geske

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