December 11, 2017

To: State Board of Agricultural Research and Education

RE: Seed Cleaning Plant at NDSU Williston Research Extension Center

Greetings,

On behalf of The Joint Williston Research Extension Center and Eastern Agricultural Research Center Joint Advisory Committee: I express our Advisory Committee unanimous support for SBARE to request the North Dakota State Legislature to appropriate $750,000 towards a new seed cleaning plant at the NDSU Williston Research Extension Center.

Budget Request:
1. The existing plant is limited in capabilities and totally not designed to prepare pulse crop or specialty crop seeds.
2. Cropping patterns in the region have exploded with diversity in the last 10-20 years. The recent 5 years has demonstrated a phenomenal increase of cropping diversity.
3. New and adapted varieties offer grain producers improving opportunities to enhance soil health and increased profitability. The total dollar impact needs to be estimated by professionals other than our committee.
4. Increased volume of specialty and traditional seeds will add tremendous income to the WREC. A private seed business would consider going in debt to build this profit center.
5. WREC has the oldest seed cleaning plant out of all other research extension centers and cleans approximately 40,000 bushels of seed each year (please see attachments).
6. The Carrington Research Extension Center and the North Central Research Extension Center were appropriated $750,000 in state funds from the North Dakota State Legislature this past legislative Session.

We appreciate and respect the research efforts and outreach programs at Williston Research and Extension Center and the North Dakota State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension Service. Our constant concern is always the specific solutions to the northwest area conditions. Research efforts must be dynamic and need to be able to adjust to our changing environmental, economic, and public situations.

Thank you for your careful attention.

Regards,

Wayne Berry
Chairman, WREC-EARC Joint Advisory Committee
Justification for A New WREC Seed Cleaning Plant

The current foundation seed conditioning facility was built in 1954, making it the oldest seed cleaning facility at the Research Extension Centers and needs replacement. The area designated to load and unload trucks only accommodates small single axle trucks. Grain legs that move the dirty and clean grain are all too small for efficient movement of grain. The grain legs are worn out and need replacement. WREC asked two companies give bids to replace the grain leg, however, neither would supply a bid because they had to place the legs through four floor levels and found it would be very difficult and not cost effective. With this outdated facility, WREC is limited to cleaning a maximum of 35 bushels per hour with the seed cleaning plant. Equipment for the distribution and conditioning of grain is currently located on five different floor levels in the building, requires constant stair climbing during seed cleaning operations creating worker safety issues. The vertical seed cleaning plants at the research extension center is not suitable for cleaning pulse crops. The conditioning plant is necessarily cleaned thoroughly at every floor level between each crop variety that is conditioned to insure seed purity for Foundation Seed. This is a task that takes two people approximately ten hours to complete and occurs about 15 times each season. Cleaning capacity would be increased from 35 bushels/hour to 200 bushels/hour (50% capacity), with new horizontal cleaner equipment and seed plant, and downtime and would significantly reduce and address safety concerns.

Superior systems for the production of pure genetics and should include color sorters that require operation in heated climate controlled buildings and is needed at WREC to separate unwanted material, diseased and insect damaged seeds, unwanted seed types to improve annual seed quality and level of germination. The current vertical seed cleaning plants at the research extension center is not suitable for cleaning pulse crops. With the increase of transgenic and identity preserved traits in the crops and crop varieties grown in North Dakota, and the increased WREC acreage for seed production, the role of the Williston Research Extension Center in pure seed increase of both transgenic and conventional crops is expected to further increase, not diminish, provided available seed cleaning facilities are available to efficiently clean and process more crops and crop seed varieties. It is certainly justified to update seed cleaning facilities at the Williston Research Extension Center to provide genetically pure seed supplies of breeder seed to the foundation seed producers and reputable producers of certified seed throughout our region to quickly transfer the economic benefit to the farm gate and producers in North Dakota.