

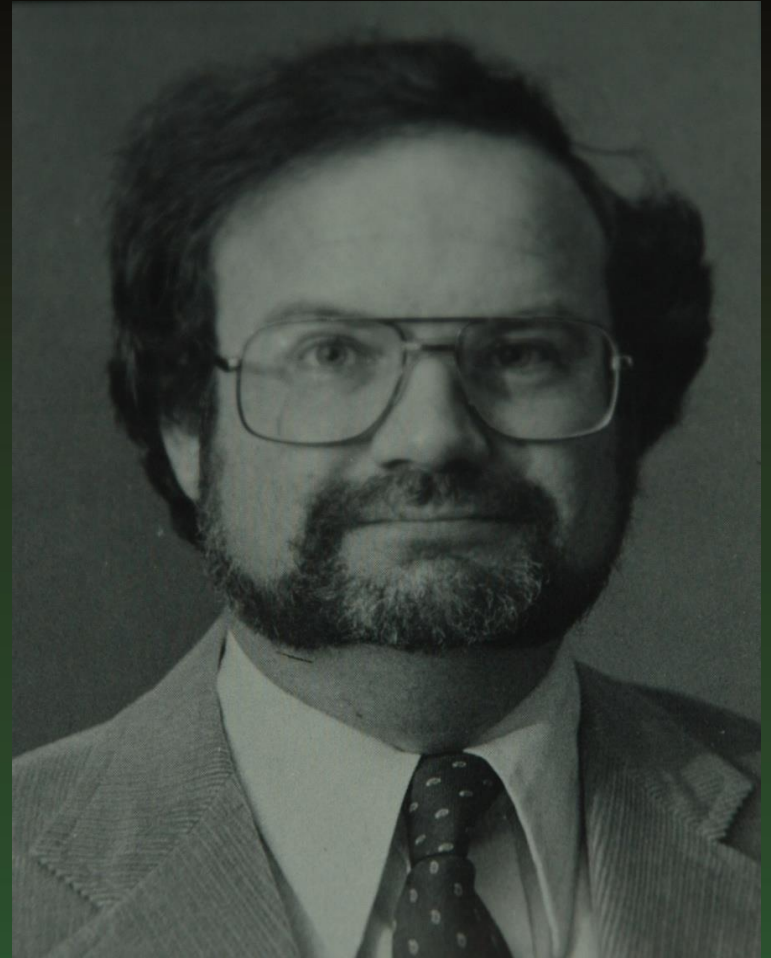
The History of Grass Roots Involvement in the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station

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"Our Purpose is to Serve"

The First Century
of the North Dakota
Agricultural Experiment Station

David B. Danbom



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Dakota Agricultural Experiment
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Horace E. Stockbridge the first President of the collage and Director of the Experiment Station wrote the following in 1891:

“We wish to impress upon the attention of the farmers of the State that this institution belongs exclusively to them, that it receives its income for the sole purpose of being expended in their aid, that in its work their desires and interests will be constantly furthered, and that their interest, assistance and suggestions are earnestly desired, solicited and expected.”

- **In the beginning the staff of the AES performed a good deal of service work such as Ladd did with food and paints and Bolley did with seed quality. While this service work was not research it did make a positive connection between the AES and the citizens of ND. As Danbom points out “by responding to the needs of a broadly conceived public constituency the Station made itself important to North Dakota. The North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station probably exerted a more profound influence than did any other such station in the United States. The NDAES was a significant factor in the life of the state, and public-interest research was a large part of the reason.” Danbom**

- In terms of economic benefits to the state of North Dakota Henry Luke Bolley was the most important of the early scientist.
- His 3 major contributions were:
 - Advocacy of the formaldehyde treatment for smutted seed.
 - Discovery of the cause of flax wilt
 - Recognition of the barberry bush as a host for wheat stem rust.

- Henry Luke Bolley cont’
- “Any one of these surely saved the state enough money to more than pay for the entire operation of the station during the sixty years Bolley worked there.” Danbom
- “His scientific heresy, along with his prickly egotism and outspoken political radicalism, alienated him from many younger colleagues at the Station. Nevertheless, he was regarded with great affection in the state, largely because his devotion to the farmers was so pure and selfless.” Danbom.

The emergence of Commodity Groups

- **The Station worked early to organize Commodity Groups.**
 - They included active and interested growers
 - Would provide Station Scientists with advice on problems
 - Would lobby the legislature effectively for funds
 - Would supply some private funds for research
 - Later on formed the Ag. Coalition which was made up of nearly all the commodity groups in ND.

Advisory Committees

- The Station drew on the Commodity Groups for “Advisory Committees on a variety of crops and livestock products.
- All the Research Extension Centers have Advisory Committees some such as North Central Carrington, and the Central Grasslands, since their inception.
- Some of the Main Station Departments have tried to form Advisory Committees, most have not been successful.

Administrative Oversight

- **Board of Trustees - 1890**
- **Board of Regents - 1917**
- **Board of Administration - 1927**
- **State Board of Higher Education – 1938-present**
- **These boards were, and still are, made up of political appointees and few if any have agricultural experience.**
- **In 1972 the St. Board of Higher Education member George Sinner, a ND farmer suggested that the Board appoint a Consultation Board to advise the SBHE on agricultural matters.**

- “The new Agricultural Consultation Board was left largely to define its own mandate.
- It tried to be a catalyst between the Station, Extension, the commodity groups, and the SBHE....at times urging changes in direction and an end to some research and also making suggestion regarding funding and policy to the SBHE.” Danbom

- **The process was marred by some frictions and frustrations, especially in the early years by members who had a problem with realizing where their authority began and ended.**
- **In addition the NDAES was not always receptive to its advise and sometimes even seemed resentful.**
- **For its part the SBHE saw the consultants as raiders on the treasury or feared they would encroach on board authority.**

- **In the early 80's there was a talk between several influential producers to remove the NDAES from under the control of the SBHE and give the consultation board full authority.**
- **The Dean/Director of the NDAES apposed this move I believe, fearing having to serve to boards, one for research and another for education.**

The evolution of the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education:

- **During the 60's and 70's with rising budgets new researchers were hired and the land base was expanded through the purchase of the Manning Ranch at Dickinson and the Establishment of the Central Grasslands Research Center in the Coteau.**

- **As the downturn of the 80's and 90's saw the AES unable to continue to grow and take on new research. Administrators made promises that they were unable to keep. In addition the AES was caught off guard by a rapid increase in Fusarium head blight (Scab). The increase acres of corn in the eastern part of the state and the conversion from plow-packer-drill to minimum till leaving the fusarium spores on the soil surface cost some producers their entire wheat and barely crops.**

Commodity groups were angry and blamed the AES for not being on top of the situation. They felt that there was waste in the station and that the AES did not listen to the needs of the producers and they wanted more oversight to find and correct the problem.

State Board of Agricultural Research

- In 1997, by legislative decree, the State Board of Agricultural Research was established to be responsible for budgeting and policy-making associated with the supervision of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station.
- In 1999 it was changed to include oversight of extension and renamed the St. Board of Agriculture Research and Education (SBARE).

North Dakota Century code:

4-05.1-19. State board of agricultural research and education

- Duties. Within the policies of the state board of higher education, the state board of agricultural research and education is responsible for budgeting and policymaking associated with the agricultural experiment station and the North Dakota State University Extension Service. The state board of Agricultural Research and Education shall:

- 1. Determine the causes of any adverse economic impacts on crops and livestock produced in this state;**
- 2. Develop ongoing strategies for the provision of research solutions and resources to negate adverse economic impacts on crops and livestock produced in this state;**

3. Develop ongoing strategies for the dissemination of research information through the extension service;

4. Implement the strategies developed under subsections 2 and 3, subject to approval by the state board of higher education;

5. Develop, with the Agricultural Experiment Station and the North Dakota State University Extension Service, an annual budget for the operations of these entities;

6. Develop a biennial budget request and submit that request to the president of North Dakota State University and the State Board of Higher Education;

7. Maximize the use of existing financial resources, equipment, and facilities to generate the greatest economic benefit from research and extension efforts and to promote efficiency;

8. Annually evaluate the results of research and extension activities and expenditures and report the findings to the legislative management and the state board of higher education;

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9. Advise the president of North Dakota State University regarding the recruitment, selection, and performance of the vice president of agricultural affairs, the extension service director, and the station director; and

10. Present a status report to the budget section of the legislative management

SBARE Membership

- **Five persons appointed by the Ag Coalition: An ag. commodity group organization;**
- **Five persons appointed from the Extension Service's multicounty program units;**
- **President of North Dakota State University or the president's designee;**
- **Two members of the legislative assembly appointed by the chair of the legislative council (one member from each political faction).**

SBARE Membership, cont'

- **Non-voting members:**
- **Vice president for Agriculture and University Extension,**
- **Director of the N.D. Agricultural Experiment Station**
- **Director of the NDSU Extension Service**
- **ND Agriculture Commissioner**

- **For the most part AES scientist were not excited with the prospects of having an additional layer of oversight**
- **It was clear that the legislators proposing this change wanted to reorganize the AES and cut some programs that they felt were not needed. One influential legislator was a large crop farmer who had lost millions to scab and was not interested in livestock research.**

SBARE: The early years

- The choice of the first chair of the SBARE was critical. Some wanted major changes “blood on the floor” While others took a wait and see attitude.**
- The choice, Mr. Jerry Doan, a rancher from central ND was level headed and worked tirelessly to head off any rash decisions by members of the Board.**
- The Board spent numerous meetings “hearing from scientists in each Department and REC.**

SBARE: The early years, cont'

- **In the end I believe the Board found that some Commodity Group, organization, or individuals supported each and every program and that the work of the AES was sound.**
- **One attempt to eliminate the sheep program at the Main Station was made until the Board learned that most of the sheep were used as “small ruminates” in beef research and teaching, not for sheep production research.**

- **In the beginning I believe that extension felt it had dodged a bullet by being excluded from the Boards control**
- **After the first legislative session when the AES faired much better that extension due to the advocacy of the Board extension pushed to be included**

- **The Board has become a strong lobbying arm for the AES and Extension.**
- **This is in no small part due to the fact that the legislators who created it feel somewhat obligated to follow its suggestions for funding of new initiatives.**

- **Since 1997 the state of North Dakota has had a fairly strong economy, due in no small part to energy development (the Bakken Formation with its 200 billion barrels of oil and good agricultural prices) which has made the Boards job much easier.**
- **If the economy of the state declines , as I am sure it will, then the Board will have a much more difficult and unpopular job.**

Agenda - State Board of Agricultural Research and Education

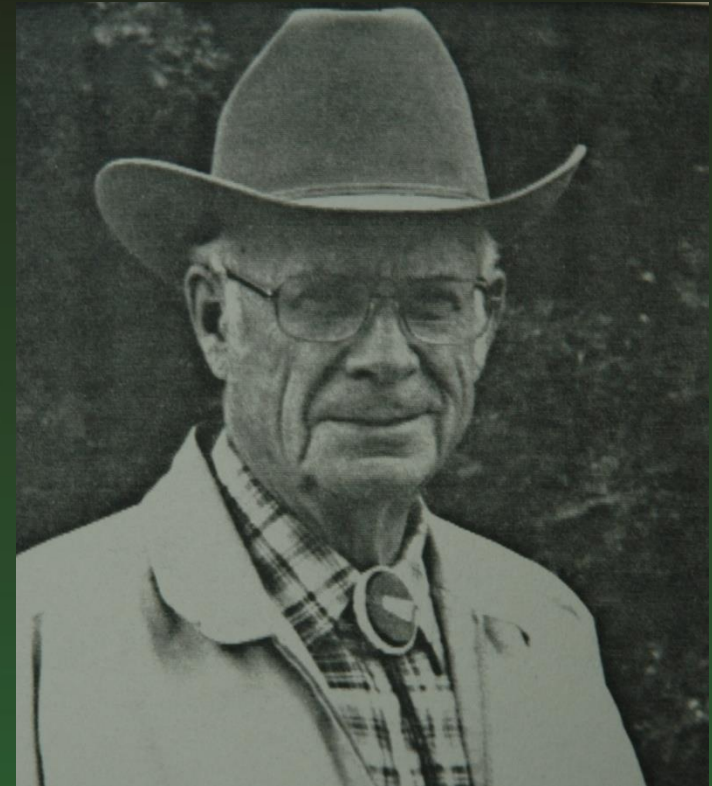
- 8:00 a.m. Welcome and introductions, approval of November meeting minutes**
- 8:10 a.m. Briefing from President Richard Hanson**
- 8:20 a.m. Grafton Evaluation – Provost/VP Craig Schnell and VP D. C. Coston**
- 8:30 a.m. Administrative updates**
- 8:45 a.m. SBARE group photo (followed by individual photos during break)**
- 9:00 a.m. Break (photos)**
- 9:15 a.m. Department chair/heads input**
- 11:20 a.m. Lt. Governor Jack Dalrymple**
- 11:30 a.m. Greenhouse tour**
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch for SBARE members at Alumni Center**
- 1:15 p.m. REC Director Kris Ringwall input**
- 1:30 p.m. Extension Leadership Team input**
- 3:00 p.m. Break**
- 3:15 p.m. SBARE discussion regarding input gathered**



A Parting Philosophy on Research Centers

“It has been my observation that research at branch stations attracts a special kind of person, part time farmer, part time livestockman, part time mechanic, part time extension specialist, part time public relations man, and full time agricultural scientist.”

Thomas J. Conlon



*Thomas J. Conlon, Dickinson
Agronomist 1948-1991
Superintendent 1969-1991*

Come Sail North Dakota

