



HETTINGER BRANCH STATION

Tim Faller, Superintendent

Hettinger Branch Station is located in southwestern North Dakota in an area where there is a high concentration of livestock. Most farming is centered around small grain production, primarily spring and winter wheats, oats and barley. Large acreages of hayland are evident in the area for support of the livestock industry. The principal soil type is Morton Silty Clay Loam and normal precipitation is 10.5 inches from April through September 30, and 14.1 inches annually.

In the *Haley Herald*, dated March 25, 1909, is found the following statement: "A bill was passed by the Legislature for an Experiment Station at Hettinger. It will be a valuable thing to the whole region west of the Missouri. Conditions in the vicinity of Hettinger are typical of this entire new country, and different in many respects from the country on the east side of the river, which already has agricultural stations. Such an institution at Hettinger will make tests for all kinds of crops and farm industries carrying on the work under strict scientific rules and keeping an exact record of the results of each experiment. It will determine by these tests the best ways to do farm work and will publish the results determined on in bulletins form for free distribution to the farmers of the state."

Since this early beginning the Hettinger Station has been doing research in many areas, including the early work with cereal grains, potatoes, corn production and dairying. The station was closed during the depression and the dairy herd was dispersed. When the station was reopened it took on a new emphasis, sheep production research. The Hettinger station is the only one in the North Central Region that centers its programs on sheep production research.

Early superintendents ran many smaller scale feeding research projects. Under the supervision of past

Superintendent LeRoy Johnson (1959-1969) and with the assistance of Director Arlon Hazen, the station took on a new positive look. A rebuilding program was begun and projects that were formally approved were initiated. The Hettinger Station was the first branch station to use a formal research project basis, some of which are contributory to regional projects. All livestock projects are coordinated with the Animal Science Department at North Dakota State University, to insure quality and reduce duplication of effort.

From 1969 to the present the rebuilding program was advanced, including livestock housing buildings, office and seed storage areas, hay storage facilities and renovation of the residence. Programs were added, including seed increase of oats and winter wheat, range work, and soils research projects. Major sheep research projects of the era include:

- I. Genetic Investigations
 - A. Breeds and crossbreeds under North Dakota Conditions
 - B. Influence of Single Trait Selection on Ewe Flock Improvement
 - C. Selection for growth in Suffolk Sheep
- II. Feeding and Management Investigations:
 - A. Nutrition of Breeding Ewe Lambs
 - B. Rumensin and Ralgro Feeding Trials
 - C. Feeding Wheat Straw for Gestating Ewes
 - D. And various Smaller Scale Investigations

The Hettinger Station presently has 450 brood ewes and 200 head of replacement stock, maintains 560 acres of land, and employs two technicians and the superintendent, who compose the nucleus for the research program.