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Guest Column



NORTH DAKOTANS AND NDSU; WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

President L. D. Loftsgard

In less than ten years, March 8, 1990 to be precise, North Dakota State University will be 100 years old. That may not impress some of the folks farther east very much, or people in other parts of the world. But as a native North Dakotan who has spent more than half that century in the state, I'm impressed with what has been accomplished.

There are people still living in our state who were alive when it was founded in 1889. When you consider what has taken place on these barren, windswept plains since a handful of hardscrabble homesteaders moved here less than a lifetime ago, you can't help but be awed by what North Dakotans have achieved. We are a tough, hardy and resilient lot. This may not be the kind of place some people would choose to live if they had a choice, but it has its compensations. The great vitality of our people is one of them.

Another thing I have always appreciated about the Northern Great Plains, and North Dakota in particular, is a sort of frontier, outpost mentality I think a lot of us have. It's tough enough to survive here without fighting among ourselves. As a consequence North Dakotans cooperate well in the spirit of getting things done.

I guess that's why working at NDSU has been such a satisfying experience for me. NDSU has been a vital part of the partnership that has existed among the people of North Dakota—its farmers and ranchers, business enterprises, townspeople and state government—from the outset. We have been inextricably involved with the development of our state's human and physical resources.

At NDSU we are fond of pointing out to legislators and others that the agricultural research done here accounts for hundreds of millions of dollars of new wealth to our state and the region each year. We are, understandably I think, proud of that. But in a sense that's only the tip of the iceberg. The impacts of NDSU on the people of North Dakota, through its nearly 15,000 alumni who live and work in the state, its tightly knit network of extension agents in every county and our strategically placed branches of the Agricultural Experiment Station, have made contributions of immeasurable importance in creating the state as it is today.

This has not been easy. Legislators are always faced with the hard decisions as to how best to allocate tax monies. We have an obligation to campaign hard for the money we feel it takes to do our job. Sometimes conflicting priorities result in lively controversies. Even looking back at those

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From the Directors



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How many times have you heard the expression, "Those were the good old days"? We seem to have our attention turned to nostalgia, antiques, and a rethinking of past experiences in farming, ranching, life in the country, and a general yearning for the so-called "slower paced" lifestyle. Instead of looking ahead, we take solace in looking back with a fondness that often obscures the hard facts of life in a previous time.

It was a time when the family farm or ranch depended almost entirely upon the muscle power of the work animals raised on the land, the members of the family, and the hired "man" or "girl." The homestead was almost totally self-contained and self-sufficient. Holistic is a word often used today to describe this totally "in tune with nature" existence. Generally this farm of the turn of the century would produce enough food for the farm family and workers and three to five others. It was a self-contained, efficient use of raw materials, but produced a low net return of food and fiber available to society in this country and the world.

Readers of this publication are familiar with the advent of scientific agriculture and the three major federal laws that established the land-grant concept in this nation; the Morrill, Hatch and Smith-Lever Acts. Together the state and federal partnership in the funding of research important to a prosperous nation and teaching of men and women in the classroom and in the field has produced a standard of living second to none in the world.

Our use of hybrid seeds, mechanized crop and livestock production methods, fertilizer, fuel, pesticides for control of weeds, insects and disease has become so commonplace that it is often viewed by some with disdain and a reaction to return to a more "organic" way to farm. We can look back, but we should not go back—we should look ahead and build on what we already know about agriculture.

This issue reports recent discoveries and implementations of knowledge in research and extension at your land-grant university in North Dakota. I am hopeful that you will enjoy reading, reflecting and speculating with me as to what lies ahead. If you can remember horsepower, steam power, tractor fuel and gasoline power, up to modern diesel power in your lifetime, then you can thrill with me as we look ahead to even greater advances in photosynthesis efficiency leading to higher yields of carbohydrates, protein and oil, nitrogen fixation leading to eventual independence from external energy sources to produce chemical fertilizers and farming methods that enhance soil and water utilization through minimum tillage and

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It is my pleasure to visit with you for the first time through the Farm Research publication. Many of you I have met and know personally; for others, this is our first meeting.

When I was farming and ranching in western North Dakota during the 1950's and 60's, Farm Research was one of the excellent information sources we used in our business. Reaching out to the people of the state has a special meaning when one has experienced both being the clientele and now having the responsibility to assure we serve our clientele well.

Administering the Extension Service function of North Dakota State University involves several basic responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is assuring that public funds, invested by the county, state and federal government to serve the people of North Dakota, are used in an effective and efficient manner.

It is the taxpayers who generate the funds and the public officials who appropriate them who ultimately judge the return on their investment. This issue of Farm Research is intended to provide you a sample smorgasbord of what's been done the past year with your investment, by briefly presenting an array of program results; results that have touched the lives of farmers, ranchers, homemakers, youth and community leaders. If you have had any contact recently with Extension Service staff, I'm sure you will find a program or two between the covers of this publication that involved you or your family.

Our motto, "In the community to serve you," is a reality because our Extension staff are assigned to every county in North Dakota. These 108 county agents, home economists and area agents are the front line, in-resident community members that provide you ready access to North Dakota State University. These county and area Extension staff are joined by 80 specialized staff on the NDSU campus who provide state program support and leadership. These campus-based Extension staff, along with the faculty in College of Agriculture, Home Economics and the Agricultural Experiment Station, have a very real part in fulfilling the Land Grant College purpose of being the "people's college"; a vision and ultimately a legislative bill sponsored by U.S. Congressman Justin Morrill and signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862. Forty-two years later, Congressmen Smith and Lever envisioned the need to bring the Land Grant University to the people. In 1914 the Smith-Lever Act enabled the establishment of an Extension Service as a part of the Land Grant University in each state. It

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in alcohol production for both direct use and as a component to stretch gasoline supplies. Experiments and demonstrations have been carried out in Extension programs to illustrate the adjustments and modifications needed to effectively use alcohol as a farm fuel.

The considerable research carried out by the Agricultural Experiment Station on production of vegetable oils (primarily sunflower oil) for use in diesel

engines has provided the basis for Extension Service education programs. These programs are designed to help producers understand fuel properties, fuel production and consumption, and power production.

The use of biomass, such as pelleted sunflower hulls and straw, for farm crop drying and other heat uses are being incorporated into educational programs as new materials become available.

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pioneer researchers and educators—the H.L. Bolleys, Shepperds, Waldrons and Ladds—for whom we feel such gratitude today, we find their lives were filled with roadblocks and frustrations they had to overcome. But as our people are today, they were men of vision and great conviction who were willing to battle for what they believed. Progress is almost inevitably the result of conflict between strongly held positions.

Today, therefore, only a single lifetime after its founding, we have a State University which has been forged from trust, confidence and cooperation on one hand and from honest controversy on the other. Both have contributed to its strength. NDSU currently has an all-time record-high enrollment of more than 8,200 students. Its physical plant is modern, attractive and in a high state of maintenance. Its faculty, research and extension staffs are made up of carefully selected, dedicated, highly skilled professionals, many of whom also have their roots in our North Dakota soil. In short, we are approaching our hundredth birthday with a full head of steam.

From time to time the allegation is made that NDSU has grown too big and fancy for the agricultural britches in which it grew up. I strongly disagree with that contention. When the institution's name was changed in 1960 from that of agricultural college to university, one of the arguments advanced was that agriculture, as the state's principal industry, deserved university status. That sounded good to some people, I'm sure. But much more important than that, I feel, is that the students, engineers, home economists, students in the social or physical sciences or the many related fields of business or education, are deserving of a full-fledged, high-quality university education. An education that provides them with a sense of perspective on the state of our planet and its people, within which they can make sound judgments as citizens and professionals. That, to me, is the gist of what NDSU is about. And as long as I have the privilege of serving as its president, that's the philosophy that will guide my actions.

We are proud of NDSU's vital role in the destiny of our state, and willing to battle when we have to gain the kind of support we believe this important work deserves. At the same time, however, we are immensely grateful to those who have the vision, trust and confidence in what we are doing here to give us their unstinting support. After all, whatever else we are as individuals, as North Dakotans we are all in this together.

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chemical fallow. If the work at this station on vegetable oils as a replacement for diesel fuel is as successful as we believe that it could be, we could even see the farm of the future again become self-sufficient for the production of food, fuel and fiber for society, but at a level much higher than we have ever dreamed possible.

Join with me as we look forward with vigor and hope to the upcoming 1981-83 biennium in North Dakota and this exciting entry point into the decade of the 80's!

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was a rather unique piece of legislation because it stipulated that three levels of government would cooperate in funding the Extension Service; county, state and federal. This partnership creates a situation of responsiveness by the Extension Service to local, state and national concerns; at the same time, no single level of government dominates. The real influence is citizen that use the service. Through a citizen advisory committee in each county and at the state level, priorities, concerns and needs are identified and programs developed to meet these needs. We seek and welcome your input through your county Extension office.

I would be remiss not to express a special note of appreciation for the continuing fine support we receive from you and your elected public officials in support of the Extension Service programs. The support includes \$6.5 million dollars in 1980. There is also the thousands of hours of volunteer time and talent contributed each year by 4-H leaders, Homemaker Club leaders, Extension advisory committee members, and the main street business owners who provide community leadership and funds for the county 4-H club program and other Extension special event activities.

May this issue of Farm Research provide you a better understanding of what we mean when we say "In your community to serve you."

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