



NORTH DAKOTA Farm Research

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Guest Column

William H. Pietsch



As the newly appointed director of the NDSU Extension Service, it is my privilege to be the guest columnist for this issue of North Dakota Farm Research. As we've tried to depict on the cover of this issue, in this role I join Dr. H.R. Lund as the leadership team for your research and extension system in North Dakota. Under my leadership, I hope you'll find your extension system responsive to your needs for innovative, research-based educational programs that impact you and your family in positive ways. Although we're a public agency, I intend to pursue a businesslike approach to serving you. In short, I want the NDSU Extension Service to be your preferred lifelong educational company.

Peter Drucker, one of America's patriarchs of business management, has said the only purpose of any business is to get good customers and keep them. Over the years, successful businesses have found the best way to accomplish this is to give customers good value for the money they spend. In other words, create value in the eyes of the customers and they will be anxious to do business with you.

Most business failures realize too late that the old adage, "The customer is always right," is still true. Successful businesses have found that constant listening is the key to knowing whether your customers feel they're getting good value or not. To determine how you, our customers, feel about the value you're getting from the taxes you spend on agricultural research and cooperative extension in North Dakota, Dr. Lund and I want to hear from you.

Part of our listening effort is currently underway as we meet you in 21 communities around the state to hear your thoughts on how we're meeting your needs. We've titled this effort "DIALOGUE 88 - A Community Forum." Webster defines dialogue as "an exchange of ideas and opinions." He further defines forum as "a medium of open discussion." Extension staff in each of the communities are working hard to create the medium of open discussion (forum). Your active participation is critical to the exchange of ideas and opinions (dialogue).

Even after this series of meetings is concluded, we want to continue the dialogue with you — the public. We hope you'll exchange ideas and opinions with us on a regular basis so we can continue to serve your needs in ways that give good value for your tax dollars. A key factor in a successful future for North Dakota will be that publicly funded research and extension continue to be a bargain for the state's citizens.

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On the Cover: William Pietsch (left) is the newly appointed director of the NDSU Extension Service and joins H.R. Lund on the leadership team for agricultural research and extension in North Dakota. Photo by Harold Caldwell.

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