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Guest Column

Brendan J. Donnelly
Vice President for Agriculture
and University Outreach

The brief period since I assumed the newly created office of vice president for agriculture and university outreach at North Dakota State University has been extraordinarily busy as we being laying the groundwork for an integrated and streamlined system for responding to the needs of agriculture and of rural North Dakota. The restructuring is based on the recommendations of a task force established last summer by NDSU President Jim Ozbun on agriculture and the university. The agriculture administrative team of Lowell Satterlee, dean of agriculture; H.R. Lund, director of the agricultural experiment station; Virginia Clark, dean of human development and education, and Bob Christman, interim director of extension, is working with me to help implement these recommendations.

It is my goal to guide the implementation of this restructuring by first listening — to farmers, agribusiness leaders, state and local officials, researchers, extension agents, faculty members, and anyone else who wishes a vote. As director of the Northern Crops Institution and, before that, as a faculty member and cereal chemist at NDSU, I have been privileged work with individuals and ag-related groups throughout North Dakota. I look forward to renewing and to broadening those relationships as I travel the state to meet with agricultural research and extension personnel and with North Dakota citizens to hear their perspectives on ways NDSU can best serve the needs of agriculture and of rural North Dakota.

In the midst of the administrative changes that are occurring in agriculture at NDSU, it is important to point out something that remains unchanged: on campus and in research and extension facilities across the state, the faculty and staff of the agriculture experiment station, the extension service, and the College of Agriculture continue to deliver high-quality programs and services. Day in and day out, the university continues to serve agriculture well.

Budget planning for the 1995-97 biennium will be a challenging task, given the significant needs of agriculture and of rural North Dakota, coupled with the impact of sharp reductions in appropriated dollars that NDSU agriculture has experienced in recent years. We will look to the agriculture community for support and guidance as we work to define future directions and priorities that serve the state effectively and efficiently.

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On the Cover: Two agricultural administrators have retired after long careers at NDSU. They are Earl Foster, chair of the crop and weed sciences department, and Don Anderson, director of experiment station research. Another long-time faculty member retired Jan. 1 is Duane Erickson, professor, animal and range sciences. In this issue, Don Anderson reflects on his NDSU career. Photo by Anne Lennox.

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reveal that productivity has more than doubled over the past 50 years. It is easy to associate a major share of these productivity increases with new technology developed by the land-grant university system. It is not by chance that North Dakota leads the nation in the production of major crops. Research will continue to be a wise investment for residents of this state and will play a major role in meeting the production challenges that arise each year as new disease, insect and weed organisms develop. All of this must be maintained in tune with environmental and food quality issues. North Dakota agriculture has become much like a fine-tuned engine that must be maintained properly if it is to continue to sustain its productivity. The gains we have made in the last 50 years could be quickly lost if research programs are neglected in the years ahead.

It has been my great pleasure to have been associated with the teaching, research and extension programs over the last 36 years. It has been an exciting and rewarding career for a farm boy from Dickey County to work with the development of agricultural research and education in North Dakota and throughout the world. In my retirement years, I expect to continue to remain active in promoting these programs at NDSU.

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An important advantage of a vice president for agriculture is that it ensures agriculture a voice at the highest administrative levels of the university, and I am strongly committed to maintaining and building upon NDSU's strong agriculture tradition. This is an exciting time for agriculture in North Dakota as new initiatives like the Dakota Growers Pasta plant at Carrington begin to add value to the state's agricultural commodities and to bring jobs and economic development to rural North Dakota. Like farmers and ranchers, agribusinesses look to NDSU for research and technical advice to help them in their enterprises, and it is critical that we maintain the capacity to deliver their services. I encourage you to communicate your views and concerns as together we forge plans for the future.

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