

NDSU

AGRICULTURE

For the Land and Its People



Spring 2025

The mission of NDSU Agriculture is to provide life-long learning opportunities and effective solutions that improve the lives of North Dakotans and build a better world. To accomplish this, we are working to stay at the forefront of technology, encourage growth and wellness among our citizens and provide growth opportunities for our students. This issue of the *For the Land and Its People* highlights some of the ways the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources (CAFSNR); North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station (NDAES); and NDSU Extension are working to build a better world.

Enjoy.

Greg Lardy

Joe and Norma Peltier Vice President for Agriculture

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources
North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station
NDSU Extension

COMMUNITY DRIVEN ♦ STUDENT FOCUSED ♦ STAKEHOLDER CONNECTED
INTEGRITY ♦ IMPACT ♦ INNOVATION



By combining
excellence in research
and teaching, the
Peltier Institute will
play a pivotal role in
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agricultural future.

NDSU Peltier Institute for Advancement in Agricultural Technology to be established

The NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources and College of Engineering are collaborating to establish the Peltier Institute for Advancement in Agricultural Technology, which builds upon the long-standing partnership between the two colleges and its department of agricultural and biosystems engineering.

By combining excellence in research and teaching, the Peltier Institute will play a pivotal role in shaping a sustainable agricultural future.

It will be named in honor of Joe '51 and Norma '23 Peltier for their lifetime involvement and philanthropic investments in NDSU and was recently approved by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education.

The Peltier Institute will lead the development of innovative academic programs that will enhance the educational experience for students by introducing them to career opportunities at the intersections of agricultural production systems, engineering, data science and artificial intelligence.

The Peltier Institute will increase opportunities for faculty to engage in interdisciplinary research, addressing societal needs to improve the efficiency and sustainability of agricultural production and food systems in the northern Great Plains.

The primary research emphasis of the Peltier Institute will include:



Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI) to make transformational advancements in precision agriculture



Engineering robotic and autonomous systems to drive technical innovations in agricultural production practices



Expanding capabilities in data science and analytics to bolster research and educational opportunities in emerging fields

“The Peltier Institute will foster greater collaboration with industry to drive economic development and translate research results into solutions that can be integrated into current products and practices,” said Greg Lardy, Joe and Norma Peltier Vice President for Agriculture.

Through NDSU Extension, the Peltier Institute will also provide outreach and training programs to stakeholders and constituents on topics related to agricultural technology.

The two colleges will move forward in the coming months with an internal search for an endowed chair for precision agriculture, an external search for a professor of practice and scholarships for students entering NDSU in the fall of 2025.

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NDSU Extension's Aging in Community Project brings care to rural communities

Two-thirds of North Dakota's 53 counties are designated as frontier, meaning fewer than six people reside per square mile. The population has gradually migrated toward the state's larger towns, leaving many older adults in these sparsely populated regions without a reliable community network of support.

On top of that, social isolation can weigh heavily on communities and can compound natural aging issues. Residents face a decision between staying in an area without accessible

services or leaving the area for a larger city, a move that can be especially difficult for older adults.

In 2022, North Dakota State University Extension started the Aging in Community Project to assist older adults in these communities. The AIC Project is a model of community support to enhance the lives of older adults and to prevent or delay moving from their rural town. Volunteers' support includes transportation, food and nutrition classes, fall prevention education, technology assistance and more.

AIC is based on a successful community-based support model called Community of Care, started in rural Cass County over 20 years ago. That model has proven to help older adults live with autonomy and dignity.

"When implementing Aging in Community, we discussed how Extension could address some of these issues using the same needs assessment process as Community of Care," says Jane Strommen, NDSU Extension gerontology specialist and AIC Project director.

The project team was led through an informal, grassroots assessment for two communities: the Lisbon area and western Morton County. Those two areas have a high NDSU Extension presence, and the team wanted to pilot the program on opposite sides of North Dakota.

Since 2022, these two pilot communities have been evaluated for effectiveness, replicability and sustainability.

Three years into the project, AIC has reached over 8,000 direct contacts with older residents through a network of services and supports. Community social events have been well-attended, reaching around 1,200 people in 2023 and again in 2024.

Transportation is a crucial focus area for AIC. Since 2022, 805 rides—over 60,000 miles—have been given by volunteers. These rides are for healthcare visits, for groceries and to visit family members.

"I don't have a vehicle that's running and I live 10 miles from town," says Jolene Loudon, a Lisbon area AIC participant. "Before, I felt so out of touch with everything, and they've just filled that void. AIC has changed my life."

Participants in AIC have progressively felt more confident, independent and connected with community resources. Additionally, the areas' steering committees have reported a revitalization in local social circles.

"Older adults now feel like, 'Oh, I can stay here. I can stay in my hometown and age there and have the services that I need,'" says Heidi Peltz with AIC partner Western Plains Public Health. "There are older adults in the community I didn't even know about that have come and reached out for services."

The pilot project has gotten national attention. AIC was featured in an NPR article and is slated to appear on CBS Sunday Morning.

The pilot project's success has project leaders hoping to expand its services in the future.

AIC is supported in part by a four-year, \$1,605,000 grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

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NDSU AG AMBASSADORS



MICHAEL UETZ

Michael Uetz receives 2025 CAFSNR Distinguished Alumni Award

Michael Uetz was recently named the 2025 NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources Distinguished Alumni Award recipient.

The award celebrates outstanding NDSU alumni, showcasing their achievements and contributions in agriculture to students, faculty and the university community.

Uetz co-founded Midan Marketing, a full-service agency dedicated to the meat industry. He leads the firm's vision and strategy, helping meat producers, processors and retailers develop effective business and marketing plans. A strong advocate for the value of meat, his work has strengthened the industry and supported animal agriculture worldwide.

Uetz earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from NDSU and a master's in food marketing from Cornell University. He is a proud NDSU graduate and has established the Michael Uetz Agriculture Scholarship Endowment to support students pursuing a degree in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources.



Ag Ambassadors

help equip students with skills and connections
for their careers in agriculture

Ag Ambassadors is an undergraduate program for North Dakota State University students pursuing majors in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources.

The program began in 1998 as a way for students to serve as public relations representatives for the College of Agriculture. Over 25 years later, the program is still instrumental in recruiting students.

The ambassadors often interact with prospective College of Agriculture students during high school visits, college fairs, Discover NDSU events and the National FFA Convention.

The Ag Ambassador program isn't just for anyone to join. Students interested in becoming ambassadors undergo an application and interview process, and in some years, only a handful of students were selected out of a few dozen applicants.

In addition to helping energize new students, the ambassadors serve NDSU by assisting with events. Although the Ag Ambassadors don't run events themselves, they help with many smaller tasks for other local organizations' agriculture-related events, such as setting up the Harvest Bowl banquet. They also help assemble classroom packets for local elementary schools through the Agriculture in the Classroom program.

"Being an Ag Ambassador has prepared me to serve my community by teaching me the importance of behind-the-scenes work," says Hannah Reutter, Ag Ambassadors president. "It's an important experience to

volunteer your time without being put in the spotlight or receiving compensation."

As president, Reutter communicates service opportunities to the ambassadors—each member must assist in at least four events per semester—and leads their biweekly meetings.

In addition to valuable professional networking, Ag Ambassadors is another way for students to connect over their shared enthusiasm for ag industry topics.

Reutter says she values her time with students in other agriculture-related fields—she's studying horticulture and crop and weed sciences—because it gives her a well-rounded perspective on the agriculture system as a whole.

Lahni Stachler, NDSU Extension agriculture and natural resources agent in Cavalier County, is a former Ag Ambassador. She says her experience helped her develop public speaking skills she uses every week in her position.

"I thank Ag Ambassadors for helping me to create and continue to cherish numerous friendships throughout my time at NDSU," she says.

Stachler recalls meeting industry professionals at events like the Harvest Bowl Banquet and the Agriculture Future of America Leaders Conference—connections that gave her confidence to begin her career.

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NDSU's Land-Grant Mission

The College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources has a tradition of excellence in educating students for real-world careers. Our students learn from and work with world-class scientists in state-of-the-art facilities. These interactions, along with a relatively low student-faculty ratio, provide opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking skills, to work in a team setting, and to capitalize on hands-on learning experiences that will allow them to be competitive in a global economy.

The North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station consists of seven Research Extension Centers placed strategically throughout the state, the Agronomy Seed Farm in Casselton and the Main Station in Fargo. We work to develop techniques and technologies to enhance the production and use of food, feed, fiber and fuel from crop and livestock enterprises.

NDSU Extension empowers North Dakotans to improve their lives and communities through science-based education. We serve all people of the state through our 52 county and Fort Berthold offices, seven Research Extension Centers and the main campus in Fargo.

For more information on the programs in this publication, contact the faculty and staff listed. For more information about our other programs or have questions, comments or suggestions, please contact me.

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8 www.ndsu.edu/agriculture

NDSU Research Extension Center 2025 Field Days Schedule

The North Dakota State University Research Extension Centers' annual field days are set. The events take place at the Research Extension Center sites across the state and feature speakers, presentations and tours covering a diverse array of topics. The field days are open to the public.

The dates and locations for the field days are:

July 14 – Central Grasslands Research Extension Center

July 15 – Hettinger Research Extension Center

July 16 – Dickinson Research Extension Center – Ranch tour

July 16 – Williston Research Extension Center – Afternoon dryland agronomy tour

July 17 – Williston Research Extension Center – Morning irrigated agronomy tour

July 17 – Dickinson Research Extension Center – Evening agronomy and horticulture tour

July 21 – Agronomy Seed Farm

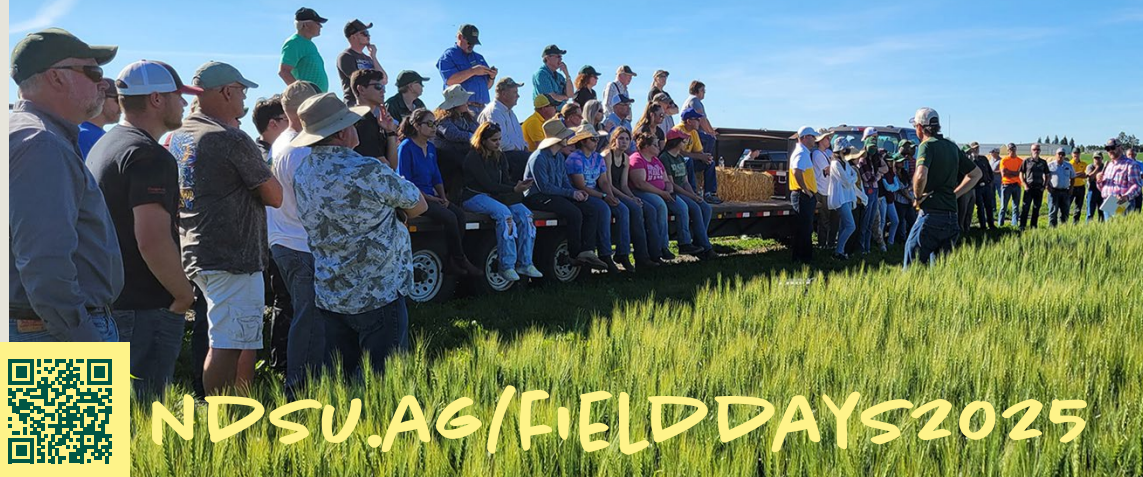
July 22 – Carrington Research Extension Center

July 23 – North Central Research Extension Center

July 24 – Langdon Research Extension Center

Aug. 7 – Oakes Irrigation Research Site

Visit ndsu.ag/fielddays2025 for more detailed information as the dates get closer.



NDSU.AG/FIELDDAYS2025