

Testimony of Ryan Brooks
Northern Pulse Growers Association
Senate Bill 2020
Senate Appropriations
Harvest Room
January 14, 2009

Good afternoon Chairman Holmberg and members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Ryan Brooks and I am a farmer & rancher from Bowman North Dakota. I also serve as a director for the Northern Pulse Growers Association. The Northern Pulse Growers Association represents dry pea, lentil and chickpea growers and processors throughout North Dakota and Montana. I am here today to provide testimony in support of SB2020 and to specifically speak on the collaborative effort between the pulse/oilseed/ wheat industries in the establishment of a quality lab at North Dakota State University.

I would like to begin by thanking the North Dakota legislature for the establishment of the pulse breeding program at NDSU in 2007. This program is paramount to the continued success of the pulse industry in the region. Prior to the NDSU breeding program, the only pulse breeding program available was the USDA/ARS facility in Pullman, Washington. While the regions pulse industry benefited greatly from the USDA/ARS facility, the establishment of a pulse breeding program in this region will provide pulse producers with the needed varieties specific to the environment conditions of the region. The two breeding programs will work in harmony providing producers with the best possible scenario for variety development.

Pulse acres have continued to increase across the region over the past several years. In 2000, North Dakota planted 125,000 acres and in 2008 over 600,000 acres of peas, lentils and chickpeas. The regions pulse industry accounts for 82% of all pulse acres produced in the United States. The efforts by the NDSU research and extension centers around the state have had a major impact on the development of the industry.

The development of a pulse/oilseed/wheat quality lab is of extreme importance to this industry as new varieties are being developed, tested and released. The quality lab will add yet another facet to the pulse industry by providing producers with valuable information that will assist them with their marketing efforts. In addition, the lab will be a key component for the industry to market pulse products domestically and internationally.

I would also like to comment on the Northern Pulse Growers Associations support for the State Board of Agriculture Research and Education and the priorities established by that board. SBARE has done a tremendous job meeting the needs of the North Dakota agriculture community.

Chairman Holmberg and committee members, I urge you to support SB2020 and more specifically the pulse/oilseed/wheat quality lab at North Dakota State University. Thank you and I would welcome any questions that you may have.