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Upcoming Events

Jan 14-Mar 31	2026 Dickey County Pesticide Applicator Trainings
Jan 23, 2026	Walsh County Pesticide Certification Training
Jan 26, 2026	Walsh County Ag Day
Jan 27-28, 2026	2026 Advanced Crop Advisers Workshop
Jan 28, 2026	Best of the Best in Wheat and Soybean Research Program- Minot
Jan 28, 2026	Waterhemp Workshop: ID and Management
Jan 28, 2026	Ward County Ag Improvement Association Annual Meeting
Feb 4, 2026	Best of the Best in Wheat and Soybean Research Program- Grand Forks
Feb 5, 2026	Best of the Best in Wheat and Soybean Research Program- Moorhead, MN
Feb 11, 2026	Understanding Waterhemp: Impacts to Your Operation
Feb 17, 2026	Getting It Done Right Dry Bean Production Webinar
Feb 18, 2026	North Central Seed Show and Ag Expo
Feb 24-25	2026 Eastern Crop, Pest, Identification & Management School
Mar 5, 2026	NDSU Soybean Symposium
Mar 11-12	2026 Western Crop and Pest Management School
Mar 17, 2026	Oakes Crop Shop Talks

[NDSU Extension Events Calendar](#)

**CROP & PEST REPORT SURVEY**

Here's a friendly reminder to complete the **Crop & Pest Report Survey**, if you haven't already. The short survey takes approximately 10 minutes and will help guide future improvements to our extension newsletter, ensuring it continues to serve you and the broader agricultural community effectively.

The survey is website- and mobile-friendly. Your participation is greatly appreciated, and all responses will remain completely anonymous. To participate, please click the survey link below or scan the QR code. Thank you for your time and input!

https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5ckri9vWuqiBUTI

**ALFALFA WEEVIL SURVEY**

This survey is for alfalfa farmers, agronomists, crop consultants, pesticide applicators, and anyone in North Dakota or Midwest states involved in alfalfa production. The goal is to better understand how growers manage alfalfa weevil and other alfalfa insect pests.

We are concerned that alfalfa weevils may be developing resistance to pyrethroid insecticides in North Dakota and other Midwestern states, following earlier reports of pyrethroid resistance in Montana and the western U.S.

Survey results will guide future research and Extension recommendations, and assess pest pressure from other alfalfa insects. If you have had difficulty managing alfalfa weevil or other alfalfa insect pests, we encourage you to participate! This multistate survey is coordinated by the University of Minnesota.



Alfalfa weevil adult (Adam Sisson, Iowa State University)

Please contribute to the Midwest Alfalfa Insect Regional Survey today. To participate, please click the survey link below or scan the QR code.

<https://z.umn.edu/alfalfapestsurvey>

Additionally, **NDSU Extension Entomology is seeking alfalfa problem fields with suspected reduced insecticide susceptibility in alfalfa weevils for the 2026 season.** We will visit fields in spring to collect live alfalfa weevil larvae for testing for pyrethroid resistance. If interested, please email janet.knodel@ndsu.edu and patrick.beauzay@ndsu.edu with *Alfalfa weevil* in the Subject line.

Thank you for your time and input.



[Janet J. Knodel](#)

Extension Entomologist



CROP DISEASE RESOURCES TO EXPLORE THIS WINTER

Winter in North Dakota has a way of slowing things down. Frozen fields, equipment parked, and driving much slower on the interstates. While we have this time to catch up on things put off during the season, the winter months are a great time to update research, management tools, and educational resources that can support many decision-making processes, long before planters start rolling again.

Below are a few trusted resources that may help keep you up to date on the latest information on disease issues. We couldn't do this alone, and we express our deepest thanks to all our partners on each tool page and video!

2025 Extension Soybean Pathology Field Research Report

This document summarizes all field research conducted by the NDSU Extension Soybean Pathology team in 2025. This document can be found [here](#).

Yield Loss Calculators

Every year, Extension pathologists across the U.S. estimate yield losses from various diseases of field crops. Check out the estimated yield losses in corn, soybean, and wheat from 2025 and previous years [here](#).

Fungicide Efficacy Tool

This tool allows users to compare the relative effectiveness of fungicide active ingredients and products against key soybean, corn, and wheat diseases based on multi-year, university-led field research trials across the U.S. Check it out [here](#).

ROI Calculators

This tool assists in determining the probability that fungicide applications are ROI-positive for disease control across soybean, corn, and alfalfa. This tool can be found [here](#).

Crop Disease Forecasting

For in-season disease risk prediction, mathematical models have been developed and validated for diseases such as white mold in soybean and tar spot in corn. To learn more about these models and the risk tool, check it out [here](#).

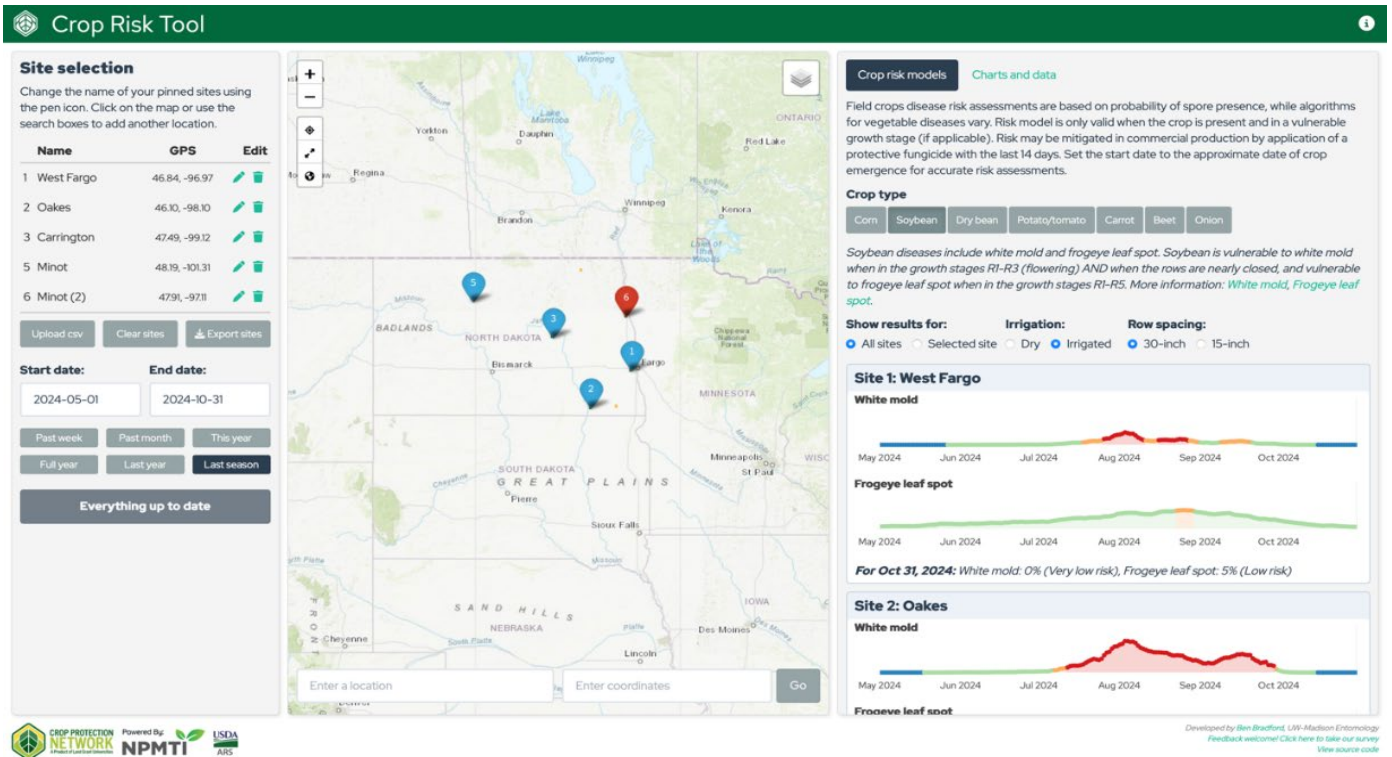


Figure 1. The Crop Risk Tool in action looking at risk level of soybean white mold and frogeye leaf spot at multiple NDSU REC's during the 2024 growing season.

SCN Profit Checker Calculator

This tool calculates yield and economic losses from Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) on your farm. Enter your location, soil texture (percent sand), soil pH, egg level, and Hg-index (we built in a default for North Dakota), and the tool uses over 35,000 data points from SCN field trials to determine the threat to your farm. Check it out, [here](#).

Common Bacterial Blight of Dry Beans Video

360-degree video focused on the identification and management of common bacterial blight. Emphasis is placed on distinguishing common bacterial blight from other bean diseases, including bacterial brown spot, halo blight, rust and anthracnose. Check it out, [here](#).

Common Bean Rust of Dry Beans Video

360-degree video exploring common bean rust identification, epidemiology and management, check it out, [here](#).

National Sunflower Association (NSA) – Disease Section

Updated pages within the NSA website exploring identification and management of 18 sunflower diseases. Navigate to each individual disease by name on the right side of the screen. Each page is complete with high quality photographs, recommendations and links to research results, posters and/or videos. Check it out, [here](#).

Sunflower Rust Video

360-video exploring sunflower rust symptoms and signs, epidemiology and management. Check it out [here](#).

[Small Grain and Corn Disease 360 Website](#)

Users have the opportunity to explore disease related information to wheat and corn. This includes a resource to identify wheat diseases as well as field research results for the efficacy of crop protection products on bacterial leaf streak in wheat, Goss's wilt in corn and Fusarium head blight in small grains. Check it out: <https://t.co/pqFLh1Gz15>

Sugarbeet Production Guide

Updates for 2026 coming soon! Aspects of sugarbeet production in North Dakota and Minnesota are covered in the web version of our traditional pocket guide, including weed control, disease and insect management, and sugarbeet root maggot forecasts. [2025 version](#)

Cercospora Leaf Spot Infection Risk

Available from mid-June through September, The Cercospora infection model integrated into NDAWN continues to be a valuable complement to calendar-based spray programs. Please check future Crop & Pest Reports for additional information. <https://ndawn.ndsu.nodak.edu/sugarbeet-cercospora.html>

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Extension Plant Pathology, Soybeans

[Sam Markell](#)

Extension Plant Pathology, Broadleaf Crops

[Andrew Friskop](#)

Extension Plant Pathology, Cereal Crops

[Eric Branch](#)

Extension Plant Pathology, Sugarbeets

2026 EASTERN CROP, PEST IDENTIFICATION, AND MANAGEMENT SCHOOL – REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

If you (or someone on your team) will be scouting crops in 2026, make sure you plan to attend the **2026 Eastern Crop, Pest Identification, and Management School**. A two-day, hands-on training designed to build confidence and accuracy in field diagnosis and crop decision-making. This school is geared toward undergraduate students and first- to second-year crop scouts, but it is also a great fit for new agronomists, crop consultants, ag retail employees, and anyone who wants a stronger foundation in crop and pest identification.

This program focuses on disease, insect, and weed identification, and on other production problems across many of the major crops in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota, including wheat, barley, corn, soybean, dry bean, canola, and sunflower.



This school combines traditional instruction with practical, real-world scouting material to help attendees make confident in-season decisions. Sessions will cover topics such as

- **Crop scouting basics** and how to prioritize what you see in the field
- **Crop growth staging** for corn, small grains, soybeans, dry beans, canola, and sunflower
- **Fertility issues and abiotic stress symptoms** that can look like pest injury
- **Weed identification and management** plus a soil health session to connect field symptoms to below-ground factors
- **Diseases and insects** in key crops, including wheat/barley, corn, canola/sunflower, and sugar beet

NDSU Extension specialists, NDSU Experiment Station scientists, and private industry speakers will lead the sessions.

[Event details](#)

Tuesday, Feb. 24th, 2026 (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

Wednesday, Feb. 25th, 2026 (8:15 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

FargoDome (1800 N University Dr, Fargo, ND)

Registration cost: \$175

Reference materials included: Participants will receive a resource binder with key scouting and pest ID information. Additional binders may be purchased separately for \$60.

NDSU students: Students taking the course for 1 NDSU credit will have an exam option as part of the program.

For more information, contact Barbara Nilles or Wade Webster through the NDSU Plant Pathology Department (701-231-8363) or email barbara.nilles@ndsu.edu / richard.webster@ndsu.edu

[Wade Webster](#)

Extension Plant Pathology, Soybeans



POTATO FRESH MARKET VARIETY TRIALS

The potato fresh market variety trial data is now available on the NDSU Extension webpage (<https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/publications/north-dakota-fresh-market-potato-cultivar/selection-trial-results-2025>). These trials are grown in the Red River Valley in dryland conditions to evaluate red and yellow-skinned fresh market potato cultivars or selections. We plant advanced selections from breeding programs that have been selected over years of trialing (typically coded with a letter and number sequence). The cultivars are named selections that are either recently introduced or serve as standard checks or comparisons. There are many previous years of variety trial work available on the NDSU Extension webpage. The intention of this work is to help growers and the industry identify cultivars or selections that could replace older cultivars with improved agronomic characteristics and increased pack-out to improve growers' economic returns.



Figure 1. Variety trial in 2025 grown near St. Thomas, ND.

[Andy Robinson](#)

NDSU/U of M Extension Potato Agronomist



ACCIDENT OR ASSET? VOLUNTEER CROPS AS COVER CROPS

With warm soil conditions and ample available moisture last fall, volunteer crops and regrowth were observed across much of North Dakota (Figure 1). While volunteer crops are not unusual, the density and extent observed in fall 2025 were uncommon. Volunteer crops and regrowth may pose challenges this year, particularly related to pest dynamics and nutrient management.



Figure 1. Volunteer wheat in Stark County. Picture taken on Sep. 24, 2025. Photo: Victor Gomes, NDSU Extension Cropping Systems Specialist.

During Extension meetings this winter, questions have frequently arisen about what this widespread volunteer growth could mean for crop management in 2026. The impacts of volunteer crops will vary widely based on several factors, including species, biomass production, growth stage at termination or winterkill, and soil and weather conditions. Understanding these interactions can help inform spring management decisions.

From a pest management perspective, one of the first considerations is that volunteer crops can act as a “green bridge.” Volunteer growth and associated residue may allow certain pests, such as Hessian fly, to survive between cropping seasons. Even in fields without significant volunteer pressure, maintaining a diverse crop rotation remains critical for disrupting pest life cycles and improving overall soil health.

From a soil and nutrient management standpoint, volunteer crops can be viewed as a “free cover crop.” The additional residue left behind may provide agronomic benefits such as improved snow capture, increased soil water retention, and protection against wind and water erosion. In addition, actively growing volunteer crops in the fall can take up residual soil nitrate, reducing the risk of nitrogen losses through leaching, volatilization, or denitrification over winter and into early spring.

Similar to winter-killed cover crops, nutrients taken up by volunteer plants may become available to the subsequent crop as residues decompose. The rate of nutrient mineralization depends on soil temperature and moisture, soil type, and especially the carbon-to-nitrogen (C:N) ratio of the volunteer crop, which varies by species and maturity.

For grasses such as volunteer wheat, barley, and oats, plant maturity is particularly important. Young grass plants typically have a low C:N ratio and decompose relatively quickly, releasing nutrients back into the soil. In contrast, more mature grass plants have a higher C:N ratio and decompose more slowly, temporarily immobilizing soil nitrogen. Where large amounts of mature grass residue are present, starter fertilizer or adjusted early-season nitrogen rates may be beneficial to support crop establishment.

Another crop commonly observed last fall was canola regrowth, with some fields advancing to the flowering stage. Brassica species such as canola and mustard generally have lower C:N ratios than grasses, even at more advanced growth stages. As a result, their residues tend to break down more rapidly, releasing nitrogen back into the soil relatively quickly following decomposition. As a rule of thumb, nutrients from legume species (e.g., soybean, clover, peas) and brassicas (e.g., canola, radish, turnip) tend to become available more rapidly than nutrients from grasses (e.g., HRSW, durum, oats, barley, rye).

To evaluate the effectiveness of volunteer hard red spring wheat (HRSW) as a cover crop, NDSU conducted plot research at Carrington and Minot. During the first growing season, positive results were observed for both cover crop biomass production and weed suppression (Figure 2). The research protocol included the following treatments:

1. No cover (control) - Volunteer HRSW (VHRSW) terminated chemically
2. VHRSW
3. VHRSW + turnip (8 lbs/ac) & hairy vetch (15 lbs/ac) - broadcast at HRSW flowering
4. VHRSW + turnip (5 lbs/ac) & hairy vetch (10 lbs/ac) - drilled after harvest
5. VHRSW + winter rye (80 lbs/ac) - broadcast at HRSW flowering
6. VHRSW + winter rye (80 lbs/ac) - drilled after harvest

Preliminary results indicate that in wet years, VHRSW can produce up to approximately 2,600 lb/ac of aboveground biomass. Biomass production from VHRSW is largely driven by harvest losses and can be managed when cover cropping is a production goal. While biomass production from VHRSW alone was substantial, treatments that included broadcast interseeding or drilled winter rye generally produced greater aboveground biomass, particularly at the Minot site. In terms of weed suppression, VHRSW provided considerable suppression compared with the chemically terminated control. However, weed suppression was generally lower than that observed in most planted cover crop treatments, with the exception of broadcast winter rye.

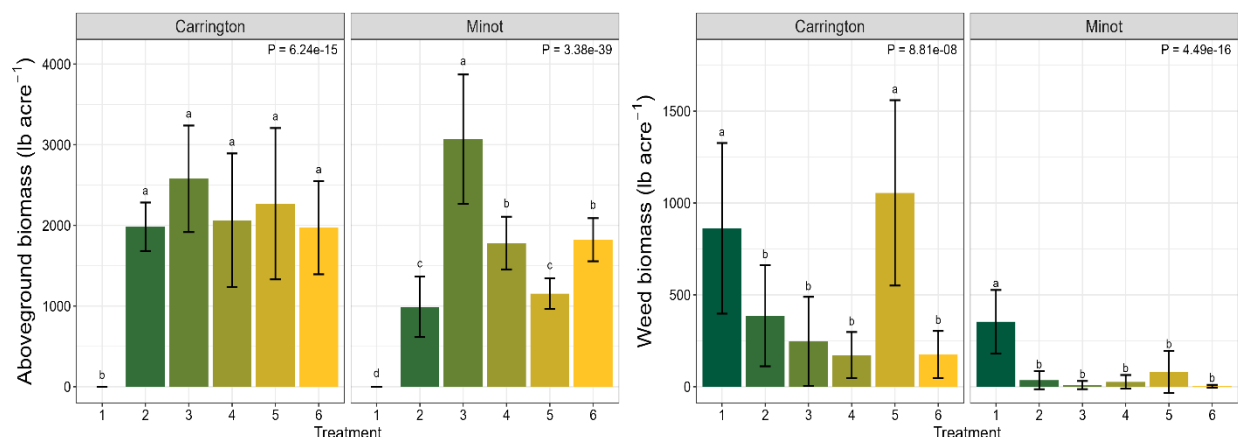


Figure 2. (a) Cover crop aboveground biomass. (b) Weed biomass used as a proxy for cover crop weed suppression. Treatments: (1) No cover (control) - Volunteer HRSW (VHRSW) terminated chemically, (2) VHRSW, (3) VHRSW + turnip (8 lbs/ac) & hairy vetch (15 lbs/ac) - broadcast at HRSW flowering, (4) VHRSW + turnip (5 lbs/ac) & hairy vetch (10 lbs/ac) - drilled after harvest, (5) VHRSW + winter rye (80 lbs/ac) - broadcast at HRSW flowering, (6) VHRSW + winter rye (80 lbs/ac) - drilled after harvest.

In summary, widespread volunteer crops observed last fall are not necessarily a liability from a nutrient standpoint, but they do warrant consideration when planning spring management programs. Fields with significant volunteer biomass may benefit from soil testing, close attention to early-season crop vigor, and flexibility in nitrogen management, particularly where grass volunteers dominate. Evaluating volunteer species, biomass, and field conditions this spring will help ensure nutrient availability is aligned with crop demand while minimizing pest risks and supporting optimal crop performance in 2026.

[Victor Gomes](#)

Extension Cropping Systems Specialist

[Carlos Pires](#)

Extension Soil Health Specialist

OPTIMIZING N INPUTS IN NORTH DAKOTA MALTING BARLEY—DATA FROM THE FIRST YEAR

This past growing season, my team and I completed the first year of a two-year project evaluating various enhanced efficiency fertilizers (EEFs). The purpose of this research was to assess how different N sources applied at the same rate influence yield, plump, and grain protein of two-row malting barley under North Dakota conditions. Below is a short snapshot of our preliminary data. For a more in-depth review, check out the paper *Optimizing Nitrogen Inputs in Barley Production in North Dakota* published in the proceedings of the [2025 North Central Extension-Industry Soil Fertility Conference](#).

Experiment Design and Location:

- Three sites were established in North Dakota near Valley City, Hillsboro, and Lakota during the 2025 growing season using two-row barley varieties AAC Synergy and Explorer.
- Eight nitrogen treatments (Table 1) were evaluated, including a non-fertilized check.
- Fertilized treatments corresponded to 80% of the regional agronomic optimum N rate for malting barley production, from 2020-2022 research ([Managing Nitrogen to Promote Quality and Profitability of North Dakota Two-Row Malting Barley](#)).
- Seeding, pest, and weed management was completed by the cooperating farmers following their typical management practices—and a huge “thanks” to them for hosting these sites!
- Following harvest, yield, test weight, kernel plump, and grain protein were measured

Table 1. Description of nitrogen fertilizer sources used in the study.

Fertilizer	Analysis	Description
Urea	46% N	Most widely used due to high N concentration and low cost.
CAN27	27% N, 4% Ca	Provides both nitrate and ammonium forms of N with added calcium, potentially improving soil structure and reducing volatility.
Amidas	35% urea-N, 5% ammonium-N, 5.5% S	Combines rapid and stable N forms, adding sulfur to enhance protein synthesis and improve grain quality.
UAN	28% N	Liquid fertilizer containing both urea and ammonium nitrate
ESN	44% N	Polymer-coated urea providing slow N release
SuperU	46% N	Urea treated with a urease (NBPT) and nitrification inhibitor (DCD)
Urea + NBPT	46%N	Urea treated with urease inhibitor NBPT
Tropicote	15.5% N, 19% Ca	Provides nitrate-N and calcium to support grain filling

What We Learned in Year 1:

- Except for the no-fertilizer check and ESN, there were no yield differences between any of the fertilizer treatments (Table 2).
- This year, weather conditions were favorable at the time of planting and fertilization, with $>\frac{1}{4}$ inch of rain received within one week of application. The precipitation received likely masked some of the differences we could have expected to see between the urea and urea treated with a urease inhibitor (SUPERU and Urea + NBPT).
- Dry mid-season conditions may have led to the ESN not “releasing” during the high-N-demand stages, leading to lower yields of the ESN treatment. This result further reinforces the current recommendation to use a blend of three- or four-parts conventional urea (or other N source) to one part ESN.
- Grain protein was more of a mixed bag compared to yield, with all treatments being statistically identical, except for CAN27, 28% UAN, and, of course, the no-N check (Table 2). A second year of data will need to be collected before comments can be made on whether any of these differences are meaningful or simply a result of this year’s conditions.

Table 2. Mean values for barley yield, grain protein content, and kernel plump averaged across three North Dakota locations.

Treatment	Yield	Protein	Plump
	bu ac ⁻¹	%	%
Check	47.2 b	10.0 c	96.2 a
ESN	53.5 ab	11.1 a	95.4 a
Urea	58.3 a	11.0 a	95.1 a
Can27	59.7 a	10.9 ab	94.9 a
Amidas	58.5 a	11.2 a	94.4 a
UAN 28	58.8 a	10.6 b	94.8 a
SuperU	59.7 a	11.0 a	94.6 a
Tropicote*	57.8 a	11.0 a	94.7 a
Urea + NBPT	58.5 a	11.0 a	94.4 a
p-value	<.0001	<.0001	NS

Note: Means with the same letter within each column are not significantly different at the .05 probability level.

Abbreviation: NS, nonsignificant; ESN Environmentally Smart Nitrogen; UAN Urea Ammonium Nitrate

*10% Tropicote + 90% Urea

N fertilization significantly improved barley yield and protein concentration relative to the unfertilized check, confirming N's essential role in achieving optimal productivity and quality. Overall, the results suggest that all N sources performed similarly under the specific conditions tested, but the choice of fertilizer should also account for economic returns, environmental impact, and the variability of conditions in future years. Keep your eyes open in 2027 for results from the second year of this study!

This research was made possible through the financial support of the North Dakota Barley Council and Anheuser-Busch, along with in-kind support from Rahr Malting and the American Malting Barley Association.

[Brady Goettl](#)

Extension Soil Science Specialist

Mairene Souza

Graduate Research Assistant



AROUND THE STATE

SOUTH-CENTRAL/SOUTHEAST ND

Get to the Advanced Crop Advisers Workshop: Registrations Still Open

The Advance Crop Advisers Workshop is being held January 27 and 28, 2026! This is an amazing workshop for all agricultural professionals, agronomists, Extension Agents, Agribusiness Representatives, and advanced farmers. This workshop will provide high-quality, in-depth information, hands-on training across many topics, and a great panel discussion.

Back by popular demand will be the pest identification quiz! Prizes will be awarded to the top three participants.

The three general sessions this year will be:

1. A panel discussion entitled: **"Make Every Input Count in 2026"**. This panel discussion will be moderated by Sam Markell, NDSU Broadleaf Crop Disease Specialist and Miki Migeheuli, North Dakota Soybean Council Director of Agronomy and Research. Panelists include Lynn Paulson, Senior Vice President and Director of Agribusiness Development with Bell Bank, Bryon Parman, NDSU Extension Agricultural Finance Specialist, Tom Peters, NDSU Extension Sugarbeet Agronomist, Janet Knodel, NDSU Extension Entomologist, and Chris Johnson, Control Consultant from Horace, ND. This panel will engage the audience to determine how to keep the farm profitable in 2026 while managing pests and fertility appropriately.
2. **Necessary and Recommended Herbicide Adjuvants** will be delivered by Bryan Young, Professor of Botany and Plant Pathology from Purdue University. Bryan will discuss the importance of using the correct adjuvant and quantity to maximize herbicide activity.
3. **Staying Grounded: Managing Stress and Supporting Mental Wellness in Agriculture** will be delivered by Monica McConkey, Minnesota Rural Health Specialist. Stress is always present in agriculture, but especially today. You will learn how to build resiliency, maintain balance during peak seasons, and create a healthier work-life mindset.

Tuesday's 1.5 hour breakout sessions include:

1. **Alternative Weed Management Technologies** will be delivered by Mike Ostlie, NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center Director and Noel Anderson, Technical Advisor for Grand Farms. Noel and Mike will discuss current and upcoming weed management technologies, including robotic weeders, weed seed destructors, and more.
2. **Fertilizer Facts and Myths** will be delivered by Brady Goettl, NDSU Extension Soil Fertility Specialist. Brady will discuss Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Sulfur cycling and whether fertilizer products live up to their claims.
3. **Buckle Up! 2026 Crop Market and Trade Outlook** will be delivered by Frayne Olson, NDSU Extension Crop Marketing Specialist. Frayne will help us understand the current crop market situation and sort out how and when to sell 2025 and 2026 crops.

Wednesday's 1.5 hour breakout sessions include:

1. **Emerging and Resistant Insect Pests in Soybean, Wheat, and Corn** delivered by Fei Yang, University of Minnesota Extension Entomologist and Janet Knodel, NDSU Extension Entomologist. Janet and Fei will discuss in depth armyworms, corn rootworms, bean leaf beetles, and corn borers.
2. **Soil Compaction and Soil Health** will be delivered by Jodi DeLong-Hughes, University of Minnesota Regional Extension Educator. Jodi will discuss soil compaction and how to mitigate it.
3. **Field Crop Diseases and Disease Forecasting Tools** will be delivered by Wade Webster, NDSU Extension Soybean Pathologist and Sam Markell, NDSU Extension Broadleaf Crops Pathologist. Sam and Wade will discuss the latest information on soybean and other broadleaf crop diseases and how effective and important disease forecasting tools can help manage certain diseases.
4. **What It Takes to Improve Weed Management** will be delivered by Tom Peters, NDSU Extension Sugarbeet Agronomist, and Jeff Stachler, NDSU Extension Cropping Systems Specialist at the Carrington Research Extension Center. Jeff and Tom will talk about the importance of properly choosing and applying herbicides to improve weed management. The small details are important today!

The Advanced Crop Advisers Workshop will be held at the Holiday Inn on 13th Avenue South in Fargo, beginning with registration at 9:00 a.m. on the 27th. For additional meeting details, visit the following link:

<https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/ag-hub/events/2026-advanced-crop-advisers-workshop>. To register for the Advanced Crop Advisers Workshop visit: www.tinyurl.com/CRECstore.

Hope to see many of you at the Advanced Crop Advisers Workshop next week!

[Jeff Stachler](#)
Griggs County Extension Agent

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NDSU

EXTENSION

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE >> CHANGING LIVES

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