

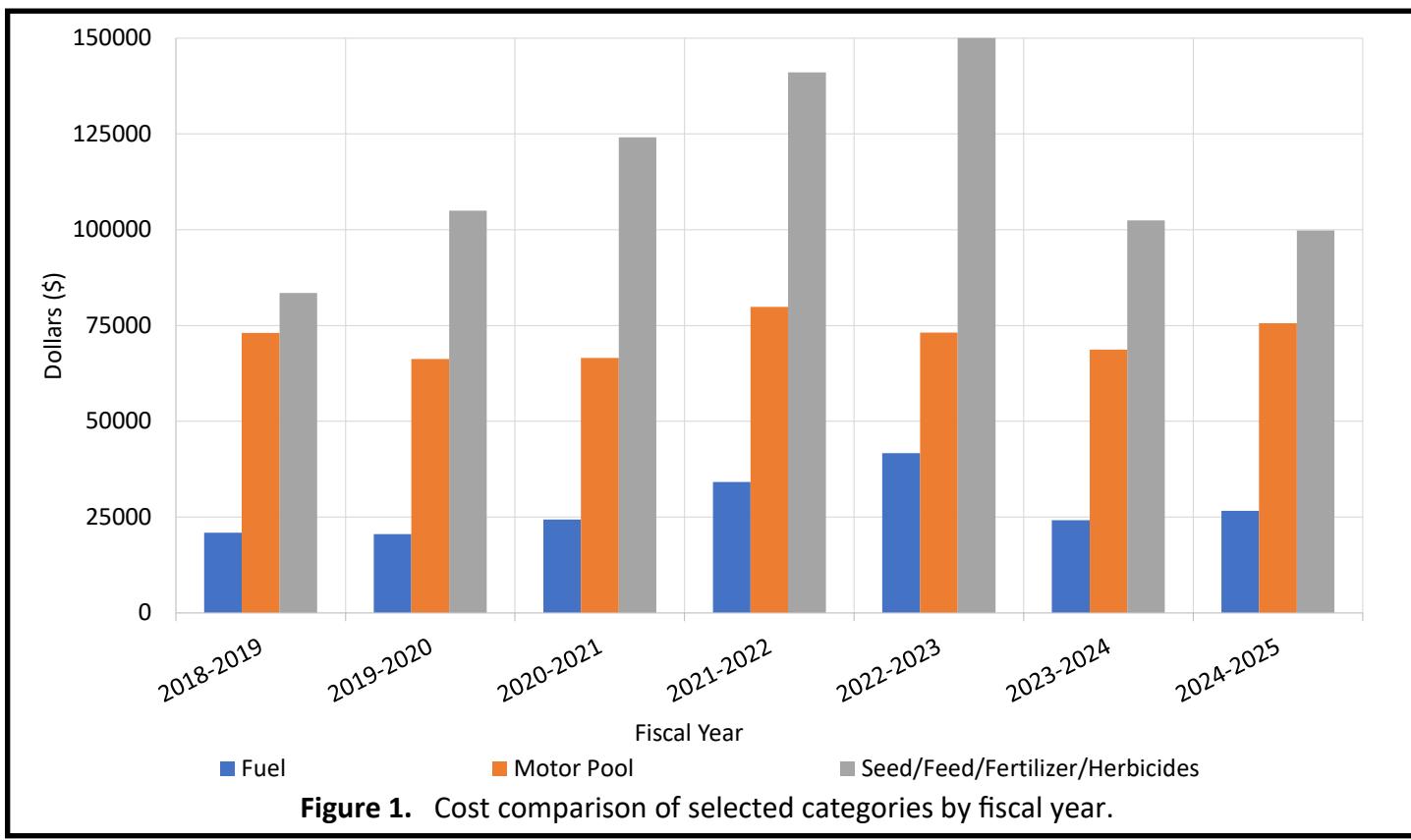
Increasing Operating Budget

Operating costs have increased significantly over five years. As shown in Figure 1, expenses for fuel, motor pool, and seed/feed/fertilizer/herbicides have risen by 23%, 3%, and 19%, respectively. Notably, seed/feed/fertilizer/herbicide costs spiked by as much as 45% from 2022 to 2023.

We appreciate the investment in our infrastructure; however, utilities were not included in those projects. Electricity for the Wardner Agricultural Lab typically costs approximately \$6,000 per year. In addition, the DREC Main Office has been annexed by the City of Dickinson, we now pay higher city water rates rather than the lower Southwest Water rates.

Buildings require ongoing maintenance. Although deferred maintenance funds are available, larger projects—such as residing and re-shingling the main office building are projected to exceed \$100,000.

We request support to increase our operating budget.



Our Request: Support for an increase in the operating budget.

Improving Citizens' Livelihood Through Urban Agriculture

There is a need for horticulture programming in western North Dakota. The energy industry has brought thousands of new residents to the region, many of whom are unfamiliar with our climate and the importance of choosing "winter-hardy" plants. This is especially evident with trees: North Dakota's harsh winters and limited precipitation make it difficult for many common landscape species to survive. Without proper guidance, many homeowners have planted unsuitable varieties, resulting in high mortality and repeated replacement costs.

The region's short growing season creates challenges for vegetable gardeners. Many commonly selected varieties require a longer growing season than our environment provides, leading to poor yields without proper variety selection and planting guidance.

Home weed management is often inadequate, creating persistent seed banks and contributing to the spread of herbicide-resistant weeds; an issue that affects both urban and agricultural areas.

These challenges underscore the need for an urban agriculturalist to deliver targeted education and outreach to new and long-time residents. The existing horticulture area at the Dickinson Research Extension Center (Figures 2 and 3) would serve as an excellent classroom and hands-on laboratory to support this programming.

We request support for an Urban Agriculturalist.



Figure 2. Dickinson Research Extension Center pollinator garden



Figure 3. Master Gardener Volunteers assisting with the upkeep of the DREC Learning and Living Classroom

Our Request: Support for an Urban Agriculturalist

For More Information:

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