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BARNES - AASTAD
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION, INC.
Morris, Minnesota 56267

Research Initiatives in Support of USDA-ARS
The North Central Soil Conservation Research Lab., Morris, MN (NCSCRL)
Statement of The Barnes-Aastad Soil & Water Conservation Research Association

The research program at the NCSCRL experienced a flat budget and a drastic loss of scientific expertise during the last 10 years. The need is urgent to re-invigorate this stand-alone research unit and re-build a strong and integrated crops/soils research program at the Lab. The scientific and applied research carried out by this Lab serves and benefits a wide range of stakeholders and customers, not only in the immediate rural communities, but throughout the Midwest and the rest of the nation.

The diminishing budget and loss of scientific expertise will force the research lab to be less focused on field and on-farm research with immediate and direct economic, environmental and developmental benefits to farmers, producers and the rural communities. Therefore, and in support of the Lab's mission, the Barnes-Aastad Association requests permanent funding in 2010 to fill four research positions (research agricultural economist, research hydrologist, climate change scientist and cropping systems ecologist). A stakeholders' meeting in 2008 identified these positions to help improve the economic return to agricultural producers and enhance sustainability of agricultural enterprises in the upper Midwest. Also, these positions will help reinvigorate an interdisciplinary research team after the loss of four research positions during the last seven years.

The agricultural economist is needed to provide farmers and the local communities with badly needed research-based answers and solutions to production problems leading to the degradation and depreciation of natural resources that support the development of agriculture and rural America.

The research hydrologist will provide farmers and producers with a better understanding of the quantity, quality and dynamics of water resources in relation to soil and landscape characteristics and management practices, especially in biomass production for bioenergy, and will help farmers achieve the double objective of maximum sustainable yields and maximum long-term profit of their operations.

The climate change research scientist will help consolidate the unique position of the Lab in Morris to collect, evaluate and quantify data on carbon storage and ecosystem effects across a unique range of soil types, climate, and farm management systems.

Finally, the cropping systems ecologist is needed to apply ecological scientific principles to the design and management of sustainable agro-ecosystems in a holistic approach, linking ecology, socioeconomics, and culture to help sustain agricultural production and environmental health.



Barnes-Aastad Association President

RESEARCH – THE KEY TO ADVANCEMENT IN AGRICULTURE