

# President's Message

**Jason Leiseth, President**  
*Arnegard*



Welcome to Fall 2024! I don't know where the summer went, as it seems like we were just calving and planting. I am writing this at the end of August as harvest is in full swing and — the real signal that summer has ended — school has started. They say, "Time flies when you're having fun." If that's true, I must be having a borderline illegal amount of fun!

The fall season brings with it a whole new list of jobs to do on the ranch — hauling hay, making silage, pre-conditioning calves, weaning, shipping and the list goes on. Adding to that list is that this is an election year. I encourage you to take the time to evaluate the candidates and research the issues, as it is our duty as citizens.

While there are some races that already seem to be decided, there is one issue I want to address. You will be voting on Measure 4 which, if passed, would eliminate property tax in North Dakota and require the state government to replace property tax revenue to local governments at a rate equal to 2024 levels. I believe that this initiative, if passed, would have a devastating impact on rural North Dakota and all of agriculture. I encourage you to discuss this issue with your local county leadership and your district political representatives to find out the real answers to how this will impact your community. I will share some of the concerns from my conversations with our local leadership.

This is a Constitutional initiated measure, which means that it cannot be changed by the legislature once it is enacted.

The state does not have the money to replace property tax payments, and will have to cut budgets or find new revenue sources, such as raising other taxes or creating new fees or taxes.

Property taxes from out-of-state owners of commercial property, railroads, publicly traded utilities and wind turbines can account for as much as 40 percent of all property tax. In our county (McKenzie County), only one of the top 25 property taxpayers is in the state, and that is our local rural electric cooperative. If we eliminate property tax, the out-of-state owners get the benefit, and North Dakotans will have to replace that revenue.

There are more than 300,000 acres of foreign-owned farmland in North Dakota (most of that land being Canadian owned). People outside our state again would benefit, while North Dakotans would have to replace that revenue. Along that same line, we are always concerned about competition for agricultural land from investors and recreation. I am afraid of what could happen if those groups could own North Dakota land without any property taxes. They would have no incentive to even rent out the property and it could be removed from production altogether. Again, North Dakotans would have to replace the revenue while out-of-state interests benefit.

Small school districts and rural counties will be disadvantaged by being locked in at 2024 levels. We all know everything costs more over time. What do you think will happen when small schools and rural communities go to the legislature and ask for increased funding in competition with large urban areas? We all know how that will end: Even more consolidation for schools and less services, such as road maintenance and fire protection, for rural communities.

The real questions here are, "Do I not want to pay property taxes because I don't want or need the services they

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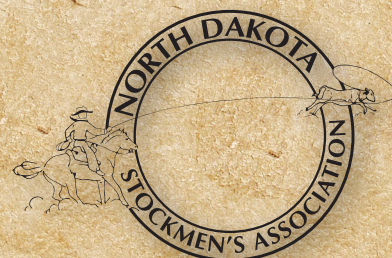
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provide? Or, do I just want someone else to pay and keep receiving the same level of service? My guess is that proponents of the measure want someone else to pay. I hope that isn't the values that most North Dakotans share. I was always taught that property taxes are a responsibility that comes with owning property. They allow the services our local communities demand because they are controlled locally.

It is important to note that the NDSA Board of Directors voted to join the Keep It Local Coalition, a statewide coalition against the initiated ballot measure and considering other forms of property tax reform, at its July meeting. I encourage you to do your homework on this one before you vote. And, look down the road 20 or 30 years to see how this could play out for our state and our future. Vote no on Measure 4 and keep North Dakota's future bright.

Keep on living the dream as you work to get all those fall projects done before it snows! ❄️

## CattleCon 2025 registration is now open

Registration is now open for CattleCon 2025, which will be held in San Antonio, Texas, Feb. 4-6. This annual event is where the beef industry meets to conduct business, attend educational sessions, experience engaging speakers and enjoy family fun.

There will be an immersive grazing management workshop and tour on Feb. 3. CattleCon 2025 officially kicks off on Feb. 4, and the cattle industry will be at work guiding both beef checkoff and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) policy programs. NCBA, the Cattlemen's Beef Board, American National CattleWomen, CattleFax and National Cattlemen's Foundation will hold annual meetings during the event.

CattleCon attendees can look forward to a variety of educational opportunities including the CattleFax Outlook Seminar, weather and industry updates, sustainability forum and the 32nd annual Cattlemen's College.

Industry leaders will be recognized during the Environmental Stewardship Award Program reception, Beef Quality Assurance Awards Program and Cattle Feeders Hall of Fame Banquet. The NCBA Trade Show will provide an opportunity to engage with exhibitors, listen to educational sessions and enjoy entertainment and daily receptions.

Cattle producers attending CattleCon 2025 are also eligible to apply for the Rancher Resilience Grant, which provides reimbursement for registration and up to three nights hotel. For more information and to apply, visit [www.ncba.org/producers/rancher-resilience-grant](http://www.ncba.org/producers/rancher-resilience-grant).

A variety of registration options are available. For more information and to register and reserve housing, visit [www.convention.ncba.org](http://www.convention.ncba.org). 📍



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