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February 11, 2025

Chair Aric Putnam
Senate Agriculture Committee
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3215
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) support for AURI Appropriation (SF934)

Dear Chair Putnam and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to share our support for Senator Kupec's bill (SF934) to fund the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI). This funding will allow AURI to continue to serve our family farmer members by adding value to Minnesota farm products. This work is important to us not only because it helps expand ag-related business, but also because we know this helps diversify our local and regional economy, develop new sources of farm income, and help make farms more resilient.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers and rural communities since 1918. We are honored to support AURI's request for base funding and a cost of living adjustment, because we know the value of their work. Our members are always innovating and looking for ways to improve their farm business. And whether we get a question related to green fertilizer production, meat processing, or new value-added uses for wool, AURI is always a first call. In turn, their team is responsive and resourceful, not only helping move a project forward, but also creating new connections to technical assistance, funding, or other partners.

AURI is notable not only in its mission, but also in governance. We are proud that an MFU leader—currently our Executive Committee member, Ted Winter—has long served on AURI's Board of Directors. We believe that farmer leadership on their Board helps ensure that AURI stays responsive, accountable, and aware of industry trends. We appreciate Sen. Kupec's leadership in support of AURI and encourage your support of their work. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for considering the needs and perspectives of Minnesota's farm families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union