

ND cropland values flatten after years of growth

After four years of double-digit growth in North Dakota's average cropland prices, 2026 reports indicate that values have slowed momentum or even slightly reversed the trend in some regions.

According to the ND Department of Trust Land's annual land survey data, statewide cropland values grew 0.88% from 2025 to 2026. The ND County Rents and Prices Annual Survey is available at www.land.nd.gov/resources/north-dakota-county-rents-prices-annual-survey.

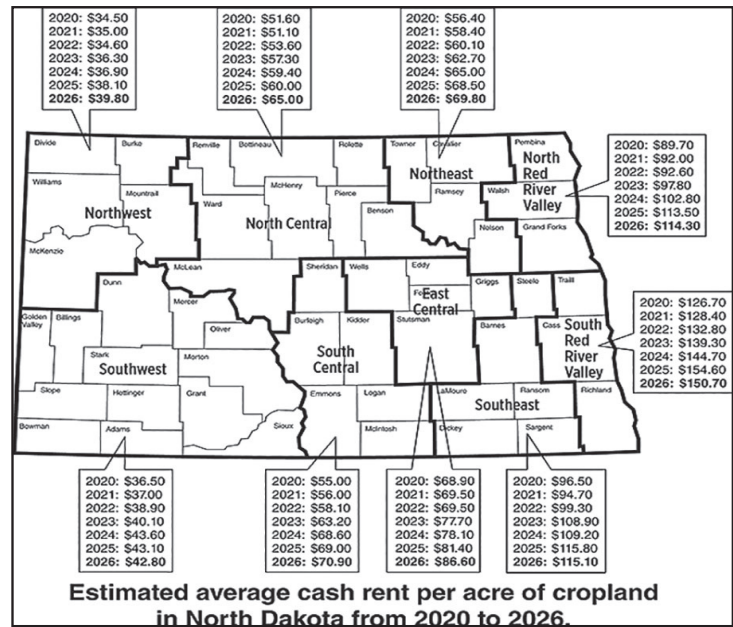
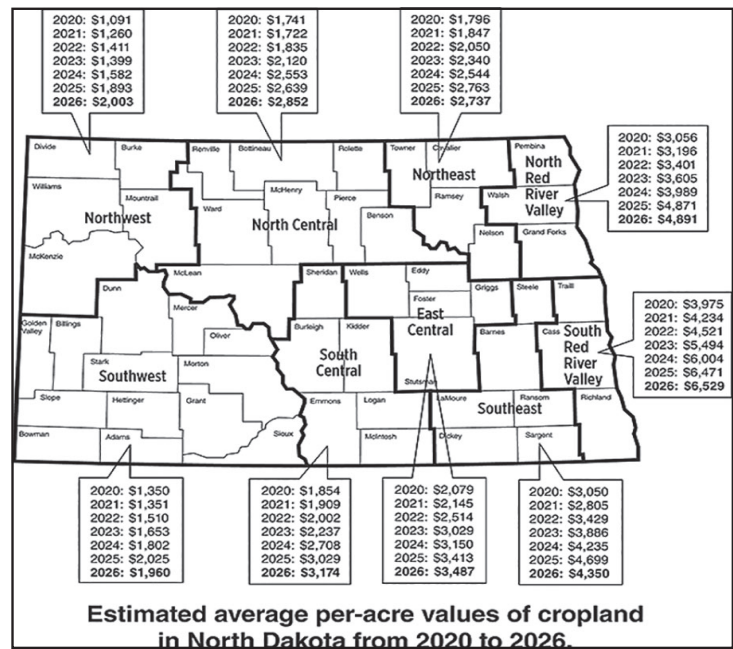
Bryon Parman, NDSU Extension agricultural finance specialist, says he sees the average flatten after four straight years of value increases. For easy interpretation across the state, Parman assembled the data by NDSU Extension region.

While the state average showed little or no growth, there were much wider region-specific swings: the North Central had a land price increase of over 8%, the Northwest grew at nearly 6%, the South Central saw an increase of just below 5% and the East Central increased approximately 2%.

However, the Southeast reported a decline in cropland values of nearly -7.5%, the Southwest declined by just over -3% and the Northeast declined almost -1%.

The North and South Red River Valley showed little change in cropland prices from 2025 to 2026.

Rents, for the first time in several years, increased more than land prices, with a statewide increase of 2%. However, rents were less variable than land prices. Three regions -- the Southwest, Southeast and North Red River Valley -- remained



essentially unchanged, moving up or down by less than 1%. The largest rent decline was in the South Red River Valley at -2.5%.

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING LAKOTA SCHOOL BOARD April 8, 2026

Chairman Sorlien called the regular school board meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Board members Travis Schmidt, Trent Matejcek, Derrick Marquart and Kris Rainsberry were present.

A motion by Kris Rainsberry, seconded by Derrick Marquart, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Travis Schmidt, seconded by Trent Matejcek, to approve the March 11 regular meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Audience -- Beau Snyder, Sam Preble, Tommy Ulland, Ethan Matejcek, Cassandra Sundeen.

A motion by Kris Rainsberry, seconded by Derrick Marquart, to approve the financial reports as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

FBLA Students -- Tommy Ulland and Ethan Matejcek spoke of their upcoming trip to FBLA nationals in San Antonio, Texas and what it means for them to be able to participate in this event.

Mr. Snyder, high school principal, reported the current high school enrollment of 71 students, student testing, certified staff engagements and student extracurricular activities.

Mr. Preble, elementary principal, reported on current elementary enrollment of 122 students, student activities, and employee professional engagements, academic and instructional updates.

Dr. Kelly Peters, superintendent, reported on building updates/ADA elevator project, DPI site visit, ACT testing, meetings and spring extracurricular activities.

Curriculum Committee -- Reviewed the final math series for 2026-27 school year from Houghton Mifflin and went over financial coverage through the curriculum expense line and the use of SRSA funds.

Co-op Committee -- Discussed the girls and boys basketball season, boys state tournament expenses and donations, setting up a Nelson County Chargers booster club with community members, and the spring sports banquet on June 7, 2026.

Old And Unfinished Business -- None.

New Business -- A motion by Kris Rainsberry, seconded by Trent Matejcek, to approve the 2026-27 math curriculum from Houghton Mifflin in the amount of \$49,687. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Derrick Marquart, seconded by Travis Schmidt, to approve the 2026-27 certified contracts as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Trent Matejcek, seconded by Travis Schmidt, to approve the 2026 summer school program (five-week program) from May 27 to June 24, student contact time from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. for grades 1 through 5. The instructor(s), Mary Halvorson and Kristin Wall, shall each receive a payment of \$3,440 under the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Kris Rainsberry,

seconded by Derrick Marquart, to approve Kathy Mita as behind-the-wheel driving instructor for the summer of 2026. Her rate of pay shall be \$35 per hour for each student driving 12 hours in total. Elite Steering, Fargo, ND, will host the classroom course via online at a cost of \$55 per student. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Kris Rainsberry, seconded by Trent Matejcek, to approve Beau Snyder and Tyson Ackerman to advise the Nelson County speed and strength program, summer of 2026. The hours shall be 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. in Lakota and Fridays in McVie. The rate of pay shall be \$20 per hour. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Derrick Marquart, seconded by Kris Rainsberry, to approve the science teacher position in 2026-27 as long-term substitute the first semester and second semester will be licensed teacher of record, held by Kayla Morten. The motion carried unanimously.

National FBLA Stipend -- No action taken as the district donates \$500 to first-place participants and \$250 for second and third place.

The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at 7 p.m. in the meeting room of the Lakota High School.

A motion by Travis Schmidt, seconded by Trent Matejcek, to approve the April bills as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Methods	Amount
Amazon Capital Services	\$1,899.50
Amazon Capital Services	552.45
Amazon Capital Services	112.13
Cole Papers	647.18
Connecting Point	194.00
Dan's Automotive Service	404.01
Docu Shred, Inc.	59.24
DRN ReadTech	2,287.50
EverSpring Inn & Suites	140.00
Haugland Trucking	12,574.40
HB Sound	19.95
Houghton Mifflin Co.	38,028.26
IXL Learning	9,375.00
LR Special Education	17,548.63
Lakota American	139.62
Lakota Hardware Store	108.45
Lakota Municipal Utilities	3,502.45
Learning A-Z	7,880.96
Miller Repair	487.29
ND School Board Assn.	214.50
Nelson Electrical Solutions	241.79
NoRedInk	1,700.00
ND Council of Educ. Leaders	700.00
Polar Communications	526.80
Rysavy Plumbing	364.20
Solberg Motor Co.	2,113.57
William Solberg	75.00
Unum Life Insurance Co. of America	54.78
Tessa Varnson	380.80
Walmart/Capital One	66.84
Total	\$102,399.30

A motion by Derrick Marquart, seconded by Kris Rainsberry, to adjourn the meeting at 6:16 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Sorlien adjourned the meeting.

Tessa Varnson
Business Manager

Jason Sorlien
Board President

ND pastureland values climb for sixth year

As North Dakota cropland values flattened from 2025 to 2026, pastureland values continued to rise.

Bryon Parman, NDSU Extension agricultural finance specialist, says pastureland values increased approximately 7% from 2025.

Since 2021, North Dakota statewide pastureland values have increased from \$972 to \$1,556 per acre, reflecting a 37.5% increase in five years.

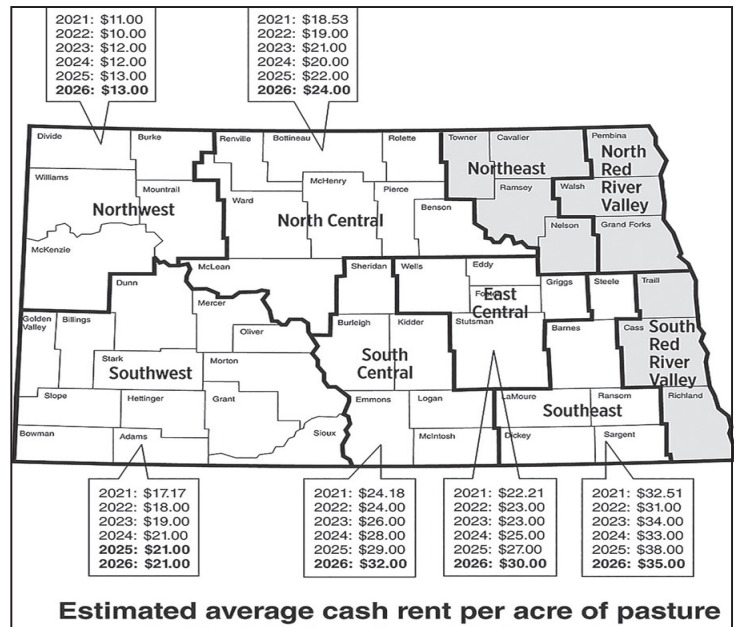
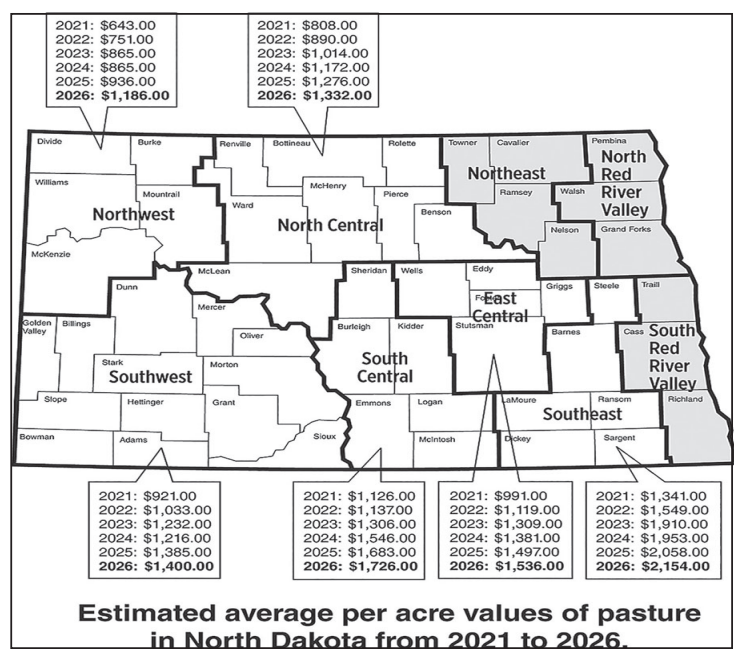
These values are based on the ND Department of Trust Land's annual land survey data. For easy interpretation across the state, Parman assembled the data by NDSU Extension region. The ND County Rents and Prices Annual Survey is available at www.land.nd.gov/resources/north-dakota-county-rents-prices-annual-survey.

"This year marks the first time since being tracked that every NDSU Extension region's pastureland values were over \$1,000 per acre," says Parman.

The NDSU regions do not include values for the north or south Red River Valley, nor the northeast region, due to low numbers of reported pastureland rental rates or sales values. Parman recommends observing trends or multiyear movements rather than single-year variation for an accurate reflection of conditions.

Every NDSU Extension region saw at least a small increase, with the largest occurring in the northwest, where pastureland values grew from \$936 to \$1,186 per acre. The north central and southeast also grew, averaging \$1,332 and \$2,154, respectively, or 4.4% and 4.7%. The east central and south central pastureland values grew less -- approximately 2.5% each -- and the southwest recorded the smallest increase at just over 1%.

Pastureland rents also increased, but at a slower pace than land values. State average pastureland rents increased by just over 4%. Average pastureland rents declined slightly in the southeast, falling from \$38 to \$35 per acre. However, rents were either flat or increased everywhere else: the north central region increased \$2 per acre to total \$24, the east central increased \$3 per acre to total \$30 and the south central increased by \$3 per acre to total \$32. The remaining regions' rent averages saw no or very



slight changes. "The growth in pastureland values isn't all that surprising given where beef cattle prices have been the last couple of years," says Parman. "However, some people might have expected a much larger increase in pastureland rents from 2025 to 2026, which did not appear to have happened."

The economics of pasture rents differ from those of crop-

land. Typically, extremely high beef cattle prices are due to low cattle inventories. Low cattle inventories means there isn't an immediate demand to rent more pasture, so there's no pressure to drive rents up despite high beef prices.

Pastureland values, however, are impacted by high beef prices, which can factor into a longer-term growth plan, rather than a one- or two-year decision.

Letters to the Editor Guidelines

With the primary and general elections coming up and letters coming in about candidates and measures, it was decided that a guideline needed to be created concerning letters to the editor.

The following is what the owner/publisher and editor have come up with. Please make note of these guidelines.

Letters to the Editor about Ballot Measures
Letters written about any ballot measure shall be 200 words or less and only express the writer's reason why they are for or against the measure. There shall be no request included in the letter for others to vote for or against the measure. If there is (or if the writer wishes to submit a longer letter), the writer will be charged \$50 per every 200 words to have their letter printed.

Letters from people who have been subscribers for a minimum of one year shall have precedence over other letters received. This means they will be printed first. Others will be printed as room allows.

Letters to the Editor about Candidates
For letters written about candidates for any office on any level (city, school, county, state, federal), the writer will be charged \$50 per every 200 words to have their letter printed.

Letters to the Editor General Information
All letters to the editor shall include the writer's name and address. A phone number and/or email address may also be included if the writer desires. Only the person's name and city will be published. It is to be understood by the readers that letters to the editor are the express opinions, thoughts or ideas of the writer of the letter and do not reflect the thoughts, ideas or opinions of this newspaper.

Did You Know?



Certain home improvement projects are more complex than others. Projects that involve working with gas lines are among the most complicated and risky undertakings, and even seasoned do-it-yourselfers are urged to leave such tasks to certified professionals. According to Angi, the average cost to move a gas line is between \$15 and \$25 per linear foot, and homeowners can expect to pay an additional \$1 to \$10 per linear foot for pipe materials. A natural gas plumber can install, extend and repair natural gas lines and ensure that the project is completed safely, on time and within homeowners' budgets. Angi notes that the average cost to move a gas line is between \$250 and \$750 for the whole project. However, if a buried line must be excavated, that cost could run into the thousands of dollars.

-metrocreativeconnection

Immunization clinic information

Immunization clinics by the Nelson-Griggs District Health Unit are held on the following dates each month.

- Lakota Courthouse, 2nd Tuesday, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- McVie Health Unit, 3rd Tuesday, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- Cooperstown City Hall, 4th Tuesday, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Vaccines are available for all ages, including adults, children and infants.

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