Dickinson REC team wins SWCS national award

By SUE ROESLER
Farm & Ranch Guide

The integrated crop and livestock research at NDSU Dickinson Research Extension Center (DREC), led by Doug Landblom, beef specialist, received a special national honor this summer.

The Soil and Water Conversancy Society (SWCS) gave a merit award to the DREC team at the 74th SWCS International Annual Conference held at the Wyndham Grand Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pa., on July 28-31.

“The Integrated Crop-Grazing research team and NDSU DREC are well-deserving recipients of the 2019 Soil and Water Conservation Society Merit Award for their outstanding research,” said Clare Lindahl, CEO of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. “Their work will encourage producers within the Dakotas and beyond to adopt regenerative and integrated management practices that can both improve profitability and protect our valuable soil and water natural resources.”

The DREC Integrated Crop-Grazing research team included: Landblom, Son-gul Senturklu, Larry Cihacek, Tim Petry, Cheryl Wachenheim, Robert Maddock, Steve Paisley (Extension beef specialist, University of Wyoming) and NDSU DREC.

Soil health significantly improved over the 10-year study, which has one more year to go.

Organic matter improved and diversity, no-tilling, keeping a living root on the soil, five-year rotations, cattle grazing unharvested corn and cover crops, and following other soil health principles led to good results for the team. The research was shared with producers throughout North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and beyond.

“Our research has shown that deviating from traditional beef production practices and adopting non-traditional methodologies can provide opportunities for profitability,” Landblom said.

The team found many positive results that included improved cattle performance, improved soil health, feed impacts, among other results.

The Integrated Crop-Grazing Research Team included: Senturklu, Cihacek, Petry, Wachenheim, Maddock, Paisley, and NDSU DREC.

In 2011, the DREC team began a five-year rotation of sunflowers, corn, peas-barley, cover crops, and wheat, both rotational and continuous as a control. Yearling beef steers were grazed unharvested cover crops, peas-barley-fodder and BMR grazing corn.

Senturklu said, “An integrated crop rotation and cattle grazing system has had an important impact due to nutrient cycling and soil nitrogen mineralization to reduce commercial fertilizer requirement.”

The Merit Award is given in recognition of an outstanding activity that promotes the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. There were many criteria for the award, including that the activity affected a large area, at least a large part of a state or province, or parts of several states or provinces.