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This new, 2004 edition of *North Dakota Agricultural Statistics* reflects a dynamic, diverse and changing agriculture industry that remains the most important segment of our state's economy.

The numbers show that North Dakota producers continue to lead the nation in the production of both major commodities and specialty crops. These include spring and durum wheat, barley, canola, pinto and navy beans, dry edible peas, flaxseed, all dry edible beans, oil and confectionary sunflowers and oats. North Dakota ranks second in lentil and honey production, third in sugarbeets and rye, and fourth in potatoes.

These statistics, however, are more than points of pride. They are a valuable tool for producers in making planting and marketing decisions. Likewise, they provide the necessary information and historical perspective for agribusinesses, investors and policymakers to make decisions that help the entire agriculture industry more effectively meet future challenges and issues.

The statisticians, technicians, enumerators and clerical staff of the North Dakota Agricultural Statistics Service have again done an outstanding job in providing North Dakota's 30,000 family farmers and ranchers with this statistical portrait of their industry.

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture is proud of its association with the North Dakota Agricultural Statistics Service. We are also pleased to help bring you *North Dakota Agricultural Statistics 2004*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Roger Johnson  
Agriculture Commissioner

