



# Oregon Pasture Network

*A Program of Friends of Family Farmers*

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February 4, 2021

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of HB 2786 and am contacting you on behalf of the Oregon Pasture Network (OPN), a community of 73 pasture based livestock farms, representing over 8,500 acres of farmland in Oregon. Our network represents producers of all sizes, from 3 to 1,500 acres, and most of our members sell their meat and other animal products directly to their consumers via farmstands, farmers markets, and straight from the farm. I am writing to urge you to support HB 2785 and the amendment.

**HB 2786 is the first step in making Oregon a more resilient, food sovereign, and economically vibrant state through the promotion of “Family Scale” farms and ranches.**

The producers who we serve and the hundreds more like them across the state grow food to feed their families and communities because it is what’s right for the health of their land, the people, and the food system of Oregon. Our producers who market directly to the consumer are integral in providing a secure stream of high quality protein to Oregonians’ dinner tables while also making our rural economies more vibrant. Especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the meat shortages that were created, it is time for Oregon to step up and support its producers of all scales.

OPN supports HB 2786, but requests to be involved in the thoughtful creation of a definition for “Family Scale” farm. We acknowledge that the current food system infrastructure is built to support the largest farm businesses and there are many barriers to small, direct to consumer, and first generation producers in the state. Also, there are many industrial conglomerate farms held by family ownership so additional criteria in defining the farms to be studied need to be developed. In exploring the barriers the current system has created, we also want to acknowledge that these farmers and farms are not a monolith. Geography, land ownership, access to processing and markets as well as identity factors for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ farmers should be taken into account when developing these definitions and framing research.

There are hundreds of farm operations across the state that want to bring more food to their communities but because of unequal access to state and federal grant funding, technical assistance, equipment, land security, and markets, they are not able to bring their farms to their

full potential. We applaud the legislature for taking up this cause and developing more institutional research to inform future policy and regulations.

Oregon has people across the state who already have the will, the drive, and the business plan to make what we believe are “family scale” farms a bigger part of the food system and rural economic landscape. Promoting these businesses and breaking down barriers to their success is in the best interest of Oregon’s food supply, the health of its working lands and people, as well as its rural economies. We urge your support of HB 2786 and inclusion of groups supporting small producers in defining its terms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice Morrison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alice Morrison  
Program Manager  
Oregon Pasture Network