



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 2787 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 2787.

HB 2787 is an essential move for the state to support the “nose to tail” ethos of Oregon’s small meat producers and consumers. Rendering is a crucial part of the meat processing system and this bill should be expanded to include studying the laws pertaining to slaughter waste disposal systems and composting of slaughter waste.

The expansion of this bill to include research into waste streams for slaughter facilities is essential because the cost of waste disposal has a huge impact on the viability of small and mid sized meat processing plants. Oregon has a shortage of meat processing capacity and if there are not creative solutions found for disposal and processing of these byproducts of meat production, building new facilities and upgrading old ones will continue to be less than economically viable. Another upside to this research is that some of these products are not waste at all.

The producers in the OPN serve a growing sector of Oregonians who want to know that their meat is sustainable, high quality, and produced/processed locally. For those who sell their meat and animal products directly to their customers (like the majority of OPN members and hundreds of other farmers across the state), there is a market for every part of the animal. In fact many of my members tell me that the lard and other organ meats that they have available sell out first. Oregon is home to not only very environmentally conscious consumers who appreciate this nose to tail style of meat marketing, but many diaspora communities who assign cultural value to these cuts and products. There is absolutely a market for every edible part of the animal and any research that the state does to bring more processing options forward for fat rendering, offal, and organ meats will put more money in the pockets of Oregon farmers.

Small and family scale farmers operate on very small margins, so using every part of the animals that they raise will help increase the viability of their businesses. As demonstrated by the meat shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic, the national food supply has flaws and bottlenecks. Investing in technology and infrastructure that will help these local businesses stay afloat will ensure food security for Oregon now and in the future.

In addition, these facilities will bring jobs to the rural communities near these farming enterprises and help bring down transportation costs, fossil fuel expenditure, and the time it takes for these small and locally focused producers to bring their products to market. For the sake of the strength of our Oregon food supply, the health of the family farming community in our state, and the vitality of rural economies, we urge you to support HB 2787 and expand this legislation to include studying the laws pertaining to slaughter waste disposal systems and composting of slaughter waste.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alice Morrison". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Alice Morrison
Program Manager
Oregon Pasture Network