



Date: February 7, 2022
To: House Committee on Business and Labor
From: Kristina Beggen, Stand Up to Factory Farms
Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Bonham and Grayber, and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee,

My name is Kristina Beggen, and I am the organizer for the Stand Up to Factory Farms coalition. We are a coalition of local, state, and national organizations concerned about the harmful impacts of mega-dairies on Oregon's family farms, communities, the environment, and animal welfare¹.

On behalf of the Stand Up to Factory Farms coalition, I am writing in support of farmworker overtime. Farmworkers should receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay as soon as possible.

Farmworkers have historically been denied overtime pay due to the white supremacist roots in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938². While this landmark bill provided equitable standards for many workers in the United States, it intentionally excluded farmworkers to appease some lawmakers and uphold racial hierarchy in the Jim Crow south. Today most farmworkers are immigrants from Latin America/the Caribbean³. Rectifying this structural disparity is an act of racial justice.

¹ <https://standuptofactoryfarms.org/>

² Marina Multhaup, Martinez-Cuevas: Reckoning with Labor Laws Racist Roots, OnLabor, <https://onlabor.org/martinez-cuevas-reckoning-with-labor-laws-racist-roots/>.

³ Farm Workers and the Fair Labor Standards Act: Racial Discrimination in the New Deal https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2205898

Agricultural labor is incredibly strenuous and requires long hours, especially at dairies. Farmworkers commonly perform up to 16 hours of work per day. Yet individual farmworkers earn \$15,000 to \$17, 499 a year and families are estimated to make between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year⁴. Farmworkers deserve a living wage to pay for their living expenses. Overtime pay would provide farmworkers a stable economic life and opportunities to increase general wealth.

Oregon's neighboring states, California and Washington, have already passed their own farmworker overtime legislation and it is time for Oregon to do the same. If Oregon does not follow suit it risks an exodus of agricultural labor that will move to other states where they will receive adequate compensation for their work.

Farmworkers deserve dignity, respect and equal rights. For too long, they have been denied rights other workers have been afforded. This must change now.

We urge you to pass farmworker overtime in the 2022 Legislative Session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor. We must end the long-standing racist exclusion of farmworkers from overtime protections as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Kristina Beggen

Organizer

Stand Up to Factory Farms

⁴ Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2015-2016: A Demographic and Employment Profile of United States Farmworkers, pg 36.
https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/naws/pdfs/NAWS_Research_Report_13.pdf