

Dear Chair Golden and Committee Members

I **OPPOSE** the proposed SB 85 bill directed towards Oregon's family farms and implore this Committee to do the same. As I read through all of the testimonies about "factory farms", "climate crisis", "harming our communities", and "cruelty to animals", I cannot help but feel there are way too many people out there that have absolutely no clue about this industry, where their food comes from that they purchase on the grocery store shelves and how regulated the CAFO industry already is in this state.

FACT: According to Oregon's own State Board of Agriculture, Oregon's agricultural sector produces \$5 Billion in production, which is roughly 13% of the Oregon economy. Our environmental protections and ODA regulation and oversight is stronger than the surrounding states and is stronger than the regulations at the Federal level. "Oregon agriculture directly and indirectly contributes 686,518 jobs, \$29.71 billion in wages, \$12.12 billion in taxes and \$2.85 billion in exports to the state" according to Oregon's Dept. of Agriculture.

FACT: The cattle industry alone is the 3rd largest agriculture commodity in the state of Oregon with over 13,000 ranches and 1,250,000 cattle (data according to the 2022 USDA, NASS Report), of which Douglas Co. (7th largest) is home to 59,000 head.

FACT: Oregon is home to 13,000 ranches distributed across the state in every county. These ranchers depend upon the 170 feedlots who are registered as CAFO's to finish cattle. Of the 170 feedlots, 18 are tier 2 CAFOs. To place any kind of moratorium on feedlot CAFOs will further strain a very challenging sector of agriculture.

FACT: Cattle ranchers in Southern Oregon already face a lack of competitive buyers for calves, lowering prices they receive. Buyers often purchase calves and move them to CAFOs in other states to raise them to market weight, forcing the cost to the consumer in this state to increase. Removing the remaining CAFOs in Oregon would seal the destruction of smaller family-owned ranches in this state.

FACT: Small Dairy Farmer Testimony: "We currently employ close to 50 full time people, many of which have been with us for many years, working to take care of animals is a 24/7, 365 days a year job. Agriculture in Oregon was recently hit with having to pay ag overtime, many people do not understand or know that we do not get to set our prices for the products we produce, thus making it hard for farmers to pay the extra wages in overtime. We pride ourselves in doing a good job with manure management, animal care and producing a nutritious, high-quality product to feed the people of the northwest, and the world. Many dairies have shut down in Oregon because of increased operating costs and low prices for the milk they produce. With inflation, current milk prices are not sustainable to cover the increased costs for labor, feed, equipment and all the other expenses it takes to make milk. I do

believe we have a serious problem with people not understanding where food comes from and what it takes to produce it. Has anyone looked into the economic impact if all the CAFO's in Oregon stopped producing food?"

FACT: Living close to the land, Oregon cattlemen are committed to environmental stewardship. Climate cycles and precipitation play a critical role in forage production and the sustainability of our operations. In that regard, cattle are an integral part of the carbon cycle, harvesting the overstory from rangelands and converting it into high quality protein for human consumption. Cattle leave regenerative deep root system carbon remaining sequestered in the soil, mitigating climate change.

FACT: The rancher's response to the pandemic was to continue to manage their livestock and bring cattle to their local facilities for harvest. It's clear that the availability of in-state processing facilities are too limited and diminishing. Cattle are often shipped further from home, costing ranchers and consumers. This is also an animal welfare issue.

There will always be "bad actors" in any industry and "bad actors" need to be dealt with, however, the majority of all CAFO operations are very clean and very regulated operations. Ask yourself, do you like bacon, cheese, milk, eggs, steak, and all those products derived from this industry on your dinner table? Where do you think it comes from? Is it really "cruelty" to animals to "finish" (ie; feed them very well and care for them very well in a confined area) before "processing" (ie; butchering) to send the end products to the grocery? A happy cow is a tasty steak. (truth).

With over 104,000 Oregonians currently unemployed, grocery costs skyrocketing and families struggling to make ends meet, limiting our ability to grow our own food and employ Oregonians on family owned farms is a recipe for disaster. There is no environmental disaster looming, contrary to the testimonies I read.

Question: Is this Committee prepared to be responsible for limiting our own food production? Our food, then will come from somewhere else, if so. And grant you, more than likely from a location without the environmental protections that we take for granted here.

Question: Is this Committee prepared to be responsible for increased grocery bills when you decide for us that we don't want to provide food in our own state? Dinner for a family of 5 will exponentially become unaffordable for many families.

This bill will literally drive agriculture from this state.

Question: Did you know that 90% of the larger ranches already send their animals to the states of Idaho and Washington for finishing & processing for lack of meat processing facilities in this state? This will be the end game for the larger family ranches in this state. The premise that these farms strip the rights of small acreage property owners is absolutely false.

As many of these ranchers and families are my friends and neighbors, I can attest that they strive toward compliance to incredibly high standards in their operations already. They already effectively use new technology to use less water, less resources, and are more environmentally friendly than any other industry in this state. Limiting our own food production and outsourcing our food supply would mean that the Oregon legislature would be turning their backs on our legacy and our family dinner tables. We do not need legislators with no expertise or even background on these issues pushing for policies that ignore existing and robust regulatory frameworks. I implore each of you to visit one of our successful operations and take a guided tour before you decide to devastate this industry. This bill would devastate family operations and communities in Oregon, and would be a massive blow to Oregon's strong agricultural sector, which is already suffering under a pile of new regulatory burdens enacted by our legislature in recent sessions.

Oregon needs agriculture, WE need agriculture to survive. There is absolutely no reason to drive this industry from this state. Where will it go? What will we eat and how much will it cost? Small family farms cannot support the population of this country. We need these larger farms & ranches. Rules and regulations have already driven the smaller dairies from this state, now are we choosing to drive the larger dairies out? Where do you think all your "dairy" products come from?

Agriculture is climate friendly and naturally sequesters carbon. IF you are concerned about climate, you will NOT want the semiconductor industry here, solar farms, or wind turbines. Semiconductors produce hazardous waste and utilize millions of gallons of water that cannot be recycled (ask the Dalles residents and their Google server farm what their water tables are like now). Wind turbines cannot be recycled, nor can a solar panel, but most importantly, you cannot eat them. Education is necessary for those who are so misguided in thinking that small dairies and farms can sustain this country and feed it's people as well as accusing this industry of not being climate friendly. To the contrary, agriculture is the most climate friendly industry than the ones you are trying to replace it with.

This is a very dangerous bill and I urge this committee to show that you value this industry and halt this bill now, a result would be one step toward saving an overregulated industry in this state and keeping our grocery bills affordable.

Respectfully,

Donna Torres

**CATTLE & CALVES
RANKED BY
COUNTY:**

- 1. Malheur
165,000
- 2. Morrow
150,000
- 3. Harney
97,000
- 4. Lake
86,000
- 5. Baker
76,000
- 6. Klamath
71,000
- 7. Douglas
59,000
- 8. Umatilla
57,000
- 9. Crook
47,500
- 10. Tillamook
44,500



DISTRICT MAP



- 11. Wallowa
36,500
- 12. Grant
35,500
- 13. Marion
29,500
- 14. Lane
26,500
- 15. Coos
25,500
- 16. Union
24,500
- 17. Linn
24,500
- 18. Yamhill
22,000
- 19. Wasco
21,500
- 20. Jackson
21,000
- 21. Jefferson
17,000
- 22. Wheeler
15,400
- 23. Clackamas
14,800
- 24. Deschutes
14,000
- 25. Polk
13,200
- 26. Gilliam
10,800
- 27. Curry
8,300
- 28. Benton
8,200
- 29. Washington
5,500
- 30. Josephine
5,400
- 31. Columbia
4,800
- 32. Clatsop
4,000
- 33. Sherman
3,400
- 34. Lincoln
3,000
- 35. Multnomah
1,300
- 36. Hood River
900

Cattle & Cattlemen in every Oregon County!

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association has been the voice of the cattle industry since 1913. Today there are more than 1.2 million cattle and calves disbursed throughout Oregon in every county.

OCA is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of a four-person officer team, seven District Vice Presidents and one Vice President at Large. The map reflects the counties in each of the seven districts.

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Total Cattle & Calves Inventory: 1,250,000
Data according to the 2022 USDA, NASS Report



OPPOSE SB 85-4: Livestock Industry Response to SB 85 Amendment Framework

Oregon has one of the nation's most environmentally protective regulatory permitting programs for livestock feeding operations. Our producers have near-perfect compliance rates and provide top-quality care for their animal. Efforts to restrict our feedlots, dairies and chicken farms demonstrate a lack of understanding of the current regulatory structure and reflect the sentiment amongst a vocal minority of voters seeking to cease animal agriculture of any size. The Dash -4 amendment reaches far beyond the desires of a broad range of Oregon voters and consumers.

We believe in Oregon's program and the responsibility of our producers. We also agree with a balanced approach at fostering responsible animal agriculture production and closing regulatory "loopholes" that could be exploited by bad actors and recognizing opportunities that could bolster our permitting program. However, the Dash -4 Amendment framework fails to accommodate several significant needs for maintaining local production and proposes arbitrary regulation without scientific or policy basis. The proposal risks the supply to our regional food processing (which is already constrained) and places our producers livelihoods and local food supply at risk.

Problems with the Dash -4 Framework:

- Fails to recognize the need for Oregon livestock operations to modernize for efficiency, profitability and to meet growth in demand.
- Neglects to address consolidation of existing operations, a requirement as many farms are being forced out of business due to low commodity prices, high regulatory costs, new direct and indirect taxes, and pending increases in labor costs due to minimum wage increases and overtime requirements.
- Puts forward significant changes to Oregon water law and restricts some users current access to water.
- Proposes limits on access to stock water, despite two bills (SB 86 and 399) dying without any public hearing. The framework proposes arbitrary thresholds.
- Creates drastic land-use conditions and restrictions on land currently zoned exclusively for agricultural use, which is already under serious cost and availability pressures. Proposes half-mile buffers for dairies that ignore the existing scientific evidence on water discharge or air quality.
- Includes unnecessary and unclear changes to animal welfare statues, risking criminal liability for accepted, responsible, and ethical agricultural practices.

Opportunities for Program Change

- Create new statutory requirement that requires two additional steps in the permitting process, including a pre-application consultation process and a new occupancy review requirement (*See SB 1513, 2020*)
- Require a water supply plan to ensure adequate access to water to protect other water-users, ensure the CAFO can operate under strict environmental standards, as well as protect animal welfare.

- Enhance tracking of the application of nutrients from CAFO's on land within a Groundwater Management Areas to ensure all organic land applications of nutrients from CAFOs that are not covered by a nutrient management plan are done at agronomic rates.
- Implement reasonable protections for new exempt groundwater uses within Critical Groundwater Areas.

For questions contact:

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OPPOSE LIMITS ON LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

SB 85 & -1 Amendment

This legislative session, several bills aim to restrict our current livestock operations in the state. These bills look to limit or ban the expansion and creation of additional responsible, highly-regulated, and ethical livestock operations throughout Oregon.

The bills directly impact family-owned farms and feedlots that produce beef, dairy, chicken, eggs, and pork for Oregonians and beyond. Our family farms are already struggling in lieu of new taxes, regulations, labor challenges, and increasing input costs, with no ability to recoup those costs.

Further restrictions on livestock operations may detrimentally impact our family owned farms/ranches, thus limiting access to locally produced protein.

THESE BILLS WOULD...

- Magnify the strain on our food supply chain, further driving up costs for milk, chicken, eggs, beef and pork.
- Accelerate the loss of Oregon family farms and local food production.
- Cease the replacement of existing facilities with more efficient, sustainable systems.
- Expand our reliance on out-of-state production, resulting in a net increase in carbon emissions for food production.



BACKGROUND...

Oregon has one of the country's most robust regulatory programs for livestock feeding operations, a program which has been recently enhanced, with support from the agriculture industry, ensuring protection for our environment and food supply.

Each of these farms or feedlots hold a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit; a program partnership between the Department of Environmental Quality and administered by the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The CAFO permit provides oversight to protect Oregon's water quality. In addition to a CAFO permit, family farms are regulated for food safety, animal health and welfare, employee health and welfare, water quantity and land use.

For additional information on the CAFO program, contact Oregon Department of Agriculture.