

Submitter: Carla Green

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2164

Dear Committee Members,

As small farmers, we are writing in support of HB2164. For 10 years in Sweet Home, we ran Sweet Home Farms, LLC, raising grass-fed cattle, sheep, and goats, as well as pigs, laying hens, and meat chickens. At the height of our operation, we had a large Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and attended 7 farmers markets weekly during peak season. We direct marketed our meat, poultry, and eggs in these ways and had a host of loyal customers. We were unable, however, to make the business profitable despite our best efforts.

A large part of the difficulty was limited access to required USDA processing, limited access to State of Oregon approved processing, extremely limited poultry processing facilities, and extremely high costs for each of these options. We were unable to produce and market the volume of products that would have allowed us to pass these processing costs on to our customers and keep prices at a reasonable level. At our business's height, we managed about 600 acres (a combination of owned and leased), bred about 100 cows/year, 90 ewes, and 40 goats. We had about 150 laying hens and raised about 400 meat chickens at a time. Our planning efforts suggested we would have to expand substantially beyond that to be profitable.

At that point, we decided to downsize and now manage about 25 breeding ewes with most of our sales as breeding stock with some stock sent to auction for the commercial market. That market is a difficult one for small producers as well, and if processing was more easily available, in a reasonable timeframe, we could sell more lambs directly for slaughter.

Sincerely,
Carla Green & Michael Polen

Sweet Home Farms
3050 NW Goodin Creek Rd.
Gaston, OR 97119