



Friends of Family Farmers ♦ PO Box 751 ♦ Junction City, OR 97448

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Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair Finger McDonald, and members of the committee:

Friends of Family Farmers is a statewide nonprofit organization that serves 1,600 farmers and supports programs and policies that help small and midsize, highly diversified, local market farmers thrive. We are writing in support of HB 2167 and urge you to provide much needed funds, not only to the OSU Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine, but also to support the vital services of the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

During our 2024 policy setting process we conducted focus groups with farmers all over the state. Many communities expressed deep concern that large animal veterinarians suitable for helping farmers with their livestock are in very short supply. It is not that these farmers could not pay the price of veterinary care, it was that they could not find anyone to come to the farm or a clinic with availability to see a sick animal. Increasing funding from the state for the Vet Med School at OSU will raise the standard of education by providing supplies, access to expert instructors and more, making the program simultaneously more attractive to potential students and able to accommodate the growing class sizes. State investment will also limit reliance on tuition increases which our farmers heard from the few vets they have access to, were a big barrier in choosing to work with farm animals. If a student has an exorbitant debt burden coming out of school, they cannot live and work in a rural community where the pay from servicing clients focused on livestock cannot keep up with their student loan payments. They have to seek more lucrative jobs working on companion animals to keep up with their payments even if their dream was to help rural communities.

In addition to the need for more vets in agricultural communities, we cannot overstate the need to continue to control, diagnose, and track zoonotic disease in Oregon. As stated in the hearing, the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory was responsible for tracking some first in the nation species spreads of avian influenza, which is currently a problem for farmers all over the country. Especially now when there are direct threats to the health of our farmers' flocks and herds, it is important to give the lab the resource to continue to keep our farmers, farmworkers and rural community members safe and informed of zoonotic disease threats. Please support additional funding for these programs in HB 2167.

Sincerely,

Alice Morrison  
Co-Executive Director  
Friends of Family Farmers