

Submitter: Aimee Marciniak
On Behalf Of: Grassward Dairy
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2979

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Wildfire:

My name is Aimee Marciniak, co-owner of Grassward Dairy in Lebanon. We're a consumer-direct microdairy supplying 100 families in Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties each week.

We have been working hard to alter our land to continue to provide good grazing and living conditions for our cows, given the increasing fluctuations and extremes in temperatures and water levels.

Spring of 2022 was incredibly wet, so the cows were in the barns for longer than we hoped, meaning we needed more stockpiled feed. Tractors were stuck for weeks, waiting for dry weather, delaying many essential spring jobs. Summer of 2023 was incredibly hot and dry, so we starting carving out parts of forested areas to move the cows during long, hot spells. Our cistern repeatedly ran dry running enough cool water to the cows. That autumn, we bought tons of seed for pasture renovation projects, but it never rained, so we stored it in the barn all winter.

We were awarded Oregon's Farmer/Rancher Disaster Resilience Grant and now have the financial ability to work on three main projects to be able to manage these weather extremes, and other possible farm emergencies in the future: increasing water storage capacity in order to continue to water animals in heat waves, diversifying pasture species in order to maintain grazing during drought periods, and expanding and securing forested shade areas for animals during heat extremes.

We particularly appreciate the straightforward application process and minimal administration and bureaucracy, typical of grants. We were able to clearly define our projects and budget without lots of office work, allowing more time to farm.

These grants are a great alternative to traditional disaster relief funding – they have given farmers the resources to maintain their crops and livestock through extreme weather events, rather than being compensated after they lose them.

Please support HB 2979 to renew funding for this valuable program.

Thank you,
Aimee Marciniak
Grassward Dairy
Lebanon