



March 18, 2025

Chair Helm, Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald and Members
of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water,

I urge you to support HB 2730, which creates the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Incentive Program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The -1 amendment provides \$400,000 for this program, which could make a significant impact for individuals pursuing farming and ranching.

My husband and I are first-generation Oregon farmers, we utilized the Young and Beginning Farmer program offered through the Farm Service Agency to get started. This program was a huge part of our success, providing an operating loan for a beginning farmer as well as ensuring that we had the educational support needed to see our farm thrive. While this program still exists, it is important that Oregon recognizes the impact of farming and ranching in our state and implements a program to support those who have a desire to continue Oregon's agricultural legacy.

The average age of a farmer in Oregon is 60, and while there are many farms that may continue to operate through the family's next generation, there are some who will not. This program allows Oregon to be more diverse in this industry by supporting new farmers who have developed a passion for and wish to be stewards of our land.

Scholarship programs for agricultural education will be a great step in the right direction for Oregon's support.

Please support HB 2730 and Oregon's beginning farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

Kate Hartnell

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