

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources

Oregon State Capitol

900 Court Street NE

Salem, Oregon 97301

March 25, 2025

Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative Levy and members of the Committee

I am writing on behalf of Heather's Family Farm in support of the Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget. This Grant program provides funding for food producers to access necessary equipment to meet the demands of the school marketplace.

I raise pasture pork in eastern Oregon. I learned about this grant funding in 2024 but did not have enough hogs to begin selling to schools. Livestock take time to breed for and raise to appropriate size for butcher. Unfortunately, this spring my sows did not produce litters so again I can't provide for local schools. This brings up an important point, livestock take time to plan to have a certain number ready by a certain date. Producers want to support our communities with healthy local food but if we can't depend on payment, we can't provide that food.

I support this grant program because it addresses a significant barrier for small and mid-sized producers selling to schools, is unique and valuable to food producers who aspire to enter the school food market, and in Oregon, there is a significant need for food producers to be equipped to meet the growing demand from schools for local products.

I ask that you support this grant program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget at \$1 million. Thank you for your time.

Heather Rudolph
Heather's Family Farm
Baker City, OR