

My name is Kate Sherman. I am 27 years old and my official title is Farmer Kate at Cauliflower Conspiracy. My partner and I farm 1.5 acres within the city limits of Portland, divided between three locations.

Food and water sustain life and I am proud to be in the business of producing food and stewarding the land. We also have three children who we are teaching about where food comes from. I couldn't have been prouder when our 2 and-a-half year-old son pointed to the bowl of green beans on our dinner table and declared, "I grew these and I picked these." This was an exaggeration on his part of course, but even our littlest shows that he makes the connection between the garden and our dinner plates, and tells us he is proud to play his part. Our older girls are fascinated with small animals and spent most of last summer in their own bean tepees, (which they did almost grow themselves.) There, they wiled away the hours pretending to be "nature fairies" while the "stinky grownups" worked.

I heard one fellow urban farmer comment recently about how his 14 year-old hestitates to help in their market garden because it "isn't cool." We talked about making it our mission to, "make farming cool again," for our children and the generations to come. Of course, the serious mission behind this is to make sure there are young people to silo the know-how of growing food and carry it on.

Currently at Cauliflower Conspiracy, we are in week 7 of a 13 week winter CSA that offers fresh produce and preserved goods. I want to thank **you** for the Pickle Bill and the Chicken Bill. The Pickle Bill has made our winter CSA possible. While we are not making a profit on it, the membership dues ensure we can squeak by and buy seed for the

spring and summer. The buzz created by the winter offerings has led many additional folks to inquire about getting in on next season's bounty. I fervently hope we can oblige, let me explain the impediments.

The farmer is a dying breed. Without farmers, there is no food. Without a diversity of farmers growing vegetables, fruit, nuts, and raising meat and dairy, in addition to the ubiquitous oil and grain products, there is no food security. That is why it is so import to pass bills like HB 2700 so those of us making farming cool again can provide food security to Oregon, and have land we can confidently make long-term investments in and pass on to future generations.

Right now we farm on borrowed land that was purchased for development. It is likely at the end of this coming growing season the owner will kick us out. Therefore, we can't afford to invest in building the soil. We have already started a hunt for new land. HB 2700 is important for helping farmers find land, and helping keep current farmland in food production, protecting the food supply for all Oregonians. HB2700 will also support organizations like Friends of Family Farmers identify aging farmers without heirs in the business, and pair them with young, landless farmers like myself, my partner and our children, who have know-how, determination and muscle, but very little money.

Everyone who starts their own business has dues to pay to build their dream. Late nights, tight budgets, etc. Dreamers have always had tough obstacles to overcome in pursuit of their ideals. However, we feel in the way of getting start up money for a farm, the deck in the banking world is impossibly stacked against us. I am excited to have the

opportunity to share my story and dream with you, our legislators, in the hopes that HB2700 and other bills like it in the future will be implemented, and come to the rescue of the oft forgotten farmers. I was amazed to learn how many children think food originates in a supermarket.

All farming requires labor, consistency and for the most part, a lifetime of modest means. My generation is in it for the satisfaction of the work and the health and happiness it brings to others, not the money. Money is a necessity though, for getting a new farm up and running, or for rehabilitating a neglected one. My partner and I are lucky enough to have a community surrounding us that is supportive, active and skilled. They give us the positive feedback we need to keep our morale up and wonderful ideas for new directions we can expand in. At the same time, we experience frustration as we claw our way, inch by inch through each step of building our livelihood. We balance raising children and running a household with holding other jobs and creeping toward being able to farm full time, our true dream and passion.

Not only do we love to grow food, I'll toot our horns and say we're really good at it. But in chasing our dream, we are living on food stamps and occasionally the goodwill of churches in order to feed ourselves. The irony is deep.

We have wonderful carpenters, mechanics, and laborers in our extended community that are just waiting for us to have the means to get materials to build us chicken coops and cold frames. We have someone who will provide us fruit and nut trees to get an orchard started. We also have a robust, growing demand for our CSA. We even

have folks just waiting for the word to come live on land with us and work for and with us to build a thriving, permanent farm, while helping us meet monthly mortgage payments. We are a down payment away from saying YES! to all of these wonderful ideas. But what bank wants to take a chance on young farmers? This is why SB2700 is so important. We have crunched the numbers and are \$20,000 away from being able to purchase up to 20 acres (which is our ideal farm size) through a lease to own scenario. Once that is in place, we have a family of supporters ready to descend and get to work.