



ROGUE FARM CORPS

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To Whom It May Concern,

Rogue Farm Corps supports state legislation to create an Aggie Bond program in Oregon. As an organization dedicated to the education and training of beginning farmers and ranchers, we are intimately aware of the difficulties farmers face seeking traditional financing.

Small and new farmers have smaller margins than most small businesses applying for loans for land and equipment. For that reason, commercial financing rates are often too high for these farmers to be able to turn a profit. Purchasers of very small farms often arrange for residential financing to avoid being denied financing by lenders who view farming as a risk.

Thirty-nine US states have economic development programs that are dedicated exclusively to small farmers – Oregon is not one of them. Although Oregon has no economic development programs dedicated to small farmers, the state business financing agency, Business Oregon, offers several general economic development programs that could also apply to small farmers. However, most farmers are not aware of these programs because Business Oregon's staff is not trained to understand the farming community and does not do targeted outreach to farmers.

The creation of an Aggie Bonds program in Oregon would reduce the cost of financing for beginning farmers and ranchers. It is a simple and inexpensive program to create. Housing it within Business Oregon will encourage the agency to market its existing programs to farmers.

On behalf of Rogue Farm Corps, I encourage you to support this important effort and create an Aggie Bonds program in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Stuart O'Neill, Executive Director