



Testimony in favor of SB 920

Michael Guebert

April 6, 2015

Dear Chairman Monnes Anderson and members of the committee,

My name is Michael Guebert and with my wife, we run a small farm in Corbett called Terra Farma where we raise dairy cows and goats, chickens, turkeys, and pigs. I'm also the Board Chair for the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District, though I am testifying today solely representing myself and my farm, and not speaking on behalf of the district.

It's become common knowledge that overuse of any medicine will lead to resistance over time, making the use of that medicine ineffective and leading to a false sense of security. But you will hear or read other testimony today stating that the routine, continuous use of antibiotics in livestock is not a problem and that only 2 of the 18 specific emerging antibiotic resistant threats identified by the CDC are related to agricultural use. While the latter part of that statement is true, those two threats are responsible for 2.5 million illnesses and 570 deaths per year in the United States. If the already documented trend of increasingly antibiotic resistant strains continues, those numbers will certainly rise.

While the FDA is set to require users to end antibiotic use for "growth promotion" in livestock, many of those users have taken to classify their use as "disease prevention." This allows them to continue using them as they have been; to facilitate raising animals in unnatural, crowded, inhumane conditions where disease would run rampant because animals kept in those conditions would never thrive.

As a small-scale livestock producer, I choose to raise my animals in a manner that promotes animal health and is also beneficial to the health of the surrounding soil and water, unlike concentrated animal feeding operations where numerous instances of environmental damage have been documented. However, if I do have a sick animal, I want to have the confidence that I can use standard antibiotics and that they will remain effective. Overuse of many types of medications for livestock have already contributed to widespread resistance which has necessitated development of new types of drugs, which is very costly and time consuming. Some of these drug resistant afflictions only affect livestock, which in itself is cause for concern, but when that resistance crosses over into human health, it's a clear sign that further action needs to be taken.

I urge the passing of SB 920 in the interest of protecting human, animal, and environmental health.