



March 16, 2017

Senate Committee On Health Care
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 785 - Antibiotics in Agriculture

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee:

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association ("OCA") is the voice of the cattle industry in Oregon. We represent over 2,000 ranchers in Oregon and aim to help grow Oregon's beef industry and promote environmentally and socially sound economic practices in producing beef products sold worldwide. Oregon has over 13,000 cattle producers, using 57% of state agricultural lands and comprising 14% of Oregon's total agricultural sector. Our ranchers are committed to producing the highest quality beef, and that of course, includes strict public health and food safety compliance.

SB 785 is an unnecessary burden on Oregon livestock producers. Over the past several years, the Oregon Legislature has continued to look at potential legislation adding a layer of regulation for producers when caring for herds and flocks. Bills like SB 785, seek to single out Oregon livestock producers by limiting legitimate and safe uses of antibiotics. Unfortunately, while bills like SB 785 add no real protections for consumers, they unfairly regulate Oregon livestock producers and limit the legitimate use of antibiotics as directed by veterinary professionals. These bills, are well intentioned, aiming to curb "antibiotic resistance," but are seriously flawed.

While well, intentioned, bills like SB 785 ignore the realities of federal law and fail to recognize that antibiotic resistance is a real problem caused by both the natural evolution of bacteria and many human activities. Our industry has worked hard over the past few years to do our part to curb unnecessary antibiotic use in food production. In addition, the livestock industry is contributing as scientists and doctors continue to look deeply into patterns of microbial resistance patterns. In fact, the FDA has released data showing Salmonella and Campylobacter prevalence at their lowest levels since the FDA's "National Animal Health Monitoring System" began collecting data on the use of antibiotics in agriculture.

During the past two years, since this committee first took up this issue, we have continued our efforts to educate Oregon legislators on the evolution of labeling standards by antibiotic manufacturers, the relationship between livestock owners and the veterinarians, our commitment to the health of our animals, and, most importantly the health and safety of consumers. SB 785 is just one more attempt to single out the livestock industry in regards to antibiotic resistance, without recognizing recent changes in federal law, risks of a vague, state regulated program and

the much-needed, safe preventative nature in which antibiotics are used currently at the direction of a veterinarian.

In 2013, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) initiated efforts to promote the *Judicious Use* of antibiotics in food-producing animals. The result has been to eliminate the use of antibiotic for growth enhancement and feed efficiency and bringing the remaining therapeutic uses—disease treatment, control and prevention—under veterinary oversight. The FDA Judicious Use requirement allows a consistent, federal standard that applies nation-wide. Further, it recognizes that at times, antibiotics are necessary and recommended for preventative purposes to protect herd health, avoid epidemics, and limit significant financial loss for producers.

SB 785, on the other hand, creates ambiguity for Oregon producers, limits **legitimate** uses of antibiotics under veterinarian supervision, and drives up our regulatory costs as we try to compete with producers in neighboring states and across the globe. Further, SB 785 and the inaccurate perceptions it perpetuates about our industry does not consider the rigorous food inspection requirements for our products that ensure food does not get to market if livestock has been improperly injected with either antibiotics or steroids. To be clear to the public and the legislature: antibiotics are not used to “fatten” up animals, and any such use is illegal.

OCA appreciates the opportunity to speak with you on this important topic. Please recognize our members’ and our industry’s commitment to public health. We ask your support in helping us educate the public about ag practices and debunking myths. We also ask you to refrain from implementing unnecessary, burdensome regulatory requirements that disadvantage Oregon’s farmers and ranchers amongst our regional and global competitors. We ask you to oppose SB 785

Nathan Jackson

President-Elect