



March 16, 2017

## **Testimony on SB 785 Senate Committee on Health Care**

Chair Monnes Anderson, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 785. We represent family-scale farmers and ranchers across Oregon. Many of our members are responsible livestock producers and have a strong interest in issues of antibiotic stewardship and management, as well as access to these medicines when needed.

We believe that SB 785, with a few key amendments, could both protect the ability of farmers and veterinarians to use antibiotics to treat sick animals and prevent the spread of disease outbreaks, while also serving the important purpose of preventing uses of medically important antibiotics for non-therapeutic purposes in livestock in ways that lead to the spread of antibiotic resistant bacteria and other pathogens.

We support the responsible and judicious use of antibiotics in livestock to treat medical issues. SB 785 could prevent antibiotic misuse in large-scale animal confinement settings where it is most likely to occur, and prevent the development and spread of antibiotic resistant bacteria linked to these types of operations. While human health concerns related to antibiotic resistant bacteria are substantial, responsible livestock producers also need antibiotics to work properly when they do need to administer them.

We would suggest two amendments to this bill:

- 1) We believe the requirement in Section 4 that farmers can only use antibiotics if prescribed by a licensed veterinarian is too broad. Already, under federal law, veterinarians must approve the use of antibiotics in feed or water. But the current provision in SB 785 expands this requirement to circumstances where antibiotics are injected into individual animals or groups of animals. In our view, it is the use of antibiotics in feed and water that pose the biggest threat SB 785 aims to address, not when farmers inject individual or small groups of animals to treat an infection or illness. Further, many parts of Oregon lack easy and affordable access to livestock veterinarians. A requirement that a farmer must see a veterinarian every time a single animal gets sick can be very costly. Sometimes, a veterinarian may not be available to visit a farm in an emergency. They may not get there in time before an animal dies, or a treatable infection spreads. While large concentrated animal feeding operations often have veterinarians on staff, smaller farmers do not.
- 2) The reporting requirement on antibiotic use for concentrated animal feeding operations in Section 5 of the bill should be limited to 'large' concentrated animal feeding operations. Again, this is where the highest likelihood of large-scale antibiotic use or misuse is likely to occur that SB 785 hopes to address. Because EPA also defines small and medium CAFOs, which in the case of 'small' CAFOs can be as few as just a handful of animals, this provision of the bill will require a significant burden on smaller farmers who are not the cause of the problem. By tightening this section to only require 'large' CAFOs to report on annual antibiotic usage, SB 785 can be a positive addition to the federal Veterinary Feed Directive and put the State of Oregon in an important oversight role monitoring the largest users of livestock antibiotics in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 785.