

## TESTIMONY: HARNEY COUNTY FARM BUREAU

HB 2106

House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

February 21, 2017

Chair Clem and Members of the Committee:

Harney County Farm Bureau writes today to express concern over the land use changes proposed by HB 2106. We are concerned that the changes will reduce the ability of farmers and ranchers in our county to raise concerns at the local level about negative impacts from mining projects that are proposed to be sited in the County. We ask the Committee not to change current law, which has been allowing mining while ensuring that impacts to neighboring farms and ranches are taken into account.

We want to start by saying that we support the mining industry and welcome additional mining in our county. We think it will bring much-needed revenue and jobs into our county and we look forward to working with the mining interests to develop the mining industry in our county. However, agriculture is the life-blood of Harney County. With nearly \$90 million in economic value as of 2012, agriculture is the economic driver of the County.

When a mine is going in next to a farm or a ranch, there is some potential for conflicts if the mining operation is not structured correctly. The county land use process gives farmers and ranchers a vehicle to raise those concerns and ensure they are addressed before the project moves forward.

Currently, Oregon law requires that any proposed mining project receive county approval when it is located on land zoned for exclusive farm use. As part of this process, the county must find that the project will not significantly increase the cost of nearby agricultural operations or force a significant change on those operations. If the county finds that there are impacts to farmland, the county will require the mining operation to mitigate those impacts. If the impact cannot be mitigated or the operation won't agree to the mitigation, the permit would not be granted. However, in Harney County, denial of a mining permit is extremely rare. **In fact, all four of the mining and aggregate projects proposed since 1997 were granted land use approval by the County.**

Under HB 2106, mining would become an "outright permitted use" on land zoned for exclusive farm use, which means that the county would not impose any conditions on the use and mining would be allowed without any county land use findings. While the operation would still be required to get all required state and federal permits, including the permit from DOGAMI and any other permits triggered by the type of operation, these permits do not address impacts to agriculture, and will not ensure that mining operations will not impact farms and ranches.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on HB 2106. We hope you can address our concerns in the legislation, and we look forward to working with the mining industry to help them establish in our county in a manner that ensures that both our industries will be productive into the future.

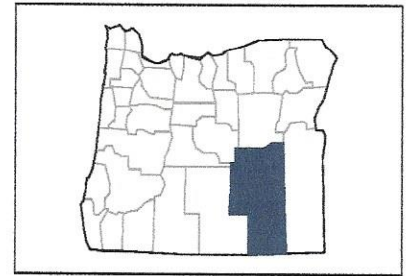
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thurston Inglis', written in a cursive style.

Thurston "Rusty" Inglis  
President, Harney County Farm Bureau

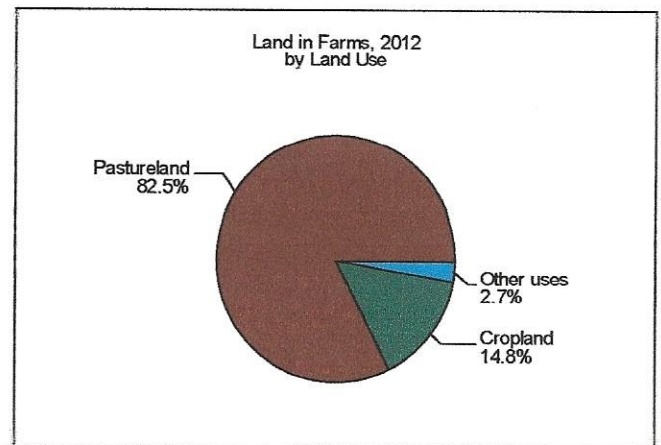
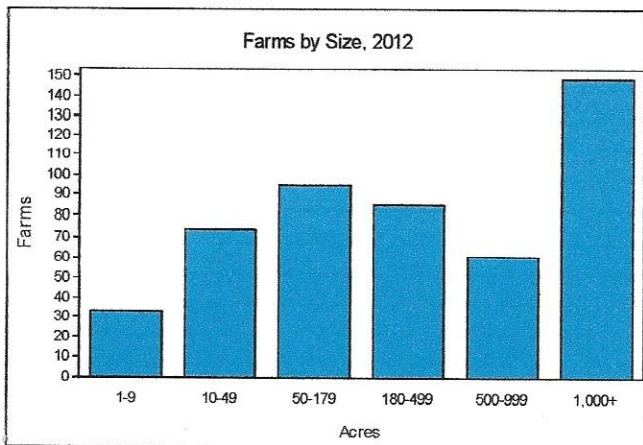
# 2012 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

## COUNTY PROFILE



### Harney County Oregon

	2012	2007	% change
<b>Number of Farms</b>	497	523	- 5
<b>Land in Farms</b>	1,505,437 acres	1,461,508 acres	+ 3
<b>Average Size of Farm</b>	3,029 acres	2,794 acres	+ 8
<b>Market Value of Products Sold</b>	\$88,946,000	\$51,735,000	+ 72
Crop Sales \$37,088,000 (42 percent)			
Livestock Sales \$51,857,000 (58 percent)			
<b>Average Per Farm</b>	\$178,965	\$98,919	+ 81
<b>Government Payments</b>	\$1,414,000	\$535,000	+ 164
<b>Average Per Farm Receiving Payments</b>	\$11,404	\$6,863	+ 66





# 2012 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

## COUNTY PROFILE

### Harney County – Oregon

#### Ranked items among the 36 state counties and 3,079 U.S. counties, 2012

Item	Quantity	State Rank	Universe <sup>1</sup>	U.S. Rank	Universe <sup>1</sup>
<b>MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD (\$1,000)</b>					
Total value of agricultural products sold	88,946	16	36	1,274	3,077
Value of crops including nursery and greenhouse	37,088	22	36	1,338	3,072
Value of livestock, poultry, and their products	51,857	9	36	878	3,076
<b>VALUE OF SALES BY COMMODITY GROUP (\$1,000)</b>					
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	351	30	33	2,482	2,926
Tobacco	-	-	-	-	436
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	-	-	635
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	(D)	33	35	(D)	2,802
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	(D)	32	34	(D)	2,724
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	8	32	32	2,551	2,678
Cut Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops	-	-	29	-	1,530
Other crops and hay	36,706	8	36	79	3,049
Poultry and eggs	19	31	36	2,091	3,013
Cattle and calves	51,065	3	36	264	3,056
Milk from cows	-	-	32	-	2,038
Hogs and pigs	8	33	34	2,210	2,827
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk	211	22	36	757	2,988
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	501	8	36	556	3,011
Aquaculture	-	-	30	-	1,366
Other animals and other animal products	53	23	35	1,399	2,924
<b>TOP CROP ITEMS (acres)</b>					
Forage-land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and greenchop	173,418	1	36	4	3,057
Field and grass seed crops, all	736	15	24	102	583
Wheat for grain, all	419	25	29	1,925	2,537
Spring wheat for grain	(D)	21	29	(D)	633
Rye for grain	(D)	1	9	(D)	950
<b>TOP LIVESTOCK INVENTORY ITEMS (number)</b>					
Cattle and calves	104,186	3	36	113	3,063
Horses and ponies	3,288	8	36	160	3,072
Sheep and lambs	2,385	20	36	387	2,897
Layers	1,373	26	36	1,608	3,040
Goats, all	570	18	36	1,097	2,996

#### Other County Highlights, 2012

Economic Characteristics	Quantity
Farms by value of sales:	
Less than \$1,000	105
\$1,000 to \$2,499	34
\$2,500 to \$4,999	42
\$5,000 to \$9,999	39
\$10,000 to \$19,999	36
\$20,000 to \$24,999	11
\$25,000 to \$39,999	32
\$40,000 to \$49,999	14
\$50,000 to \$99,999	35
\$100,000 to \$249,999	67
\$250,000 to \$499,999	32
\$500,000 or more	50
Total farm production expenses (\$1,000)	79,737
Average per farm (\$)	160,437
Net cash farm income of operation (\$1,000)	14,197
Average per farm (\$)	28,565

Operator Characteristics	Quantity
Principal operators by primary occupation:	
Farming	284
Other	213
Principal operators by sex:	
Male	433
Female	64
Average age of principal operator (years)	58.1
All operators by race <sup>2</sup> :	
American Indian or Alaska Native	7
Asian	-
Black or African American	-
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	-
White	832
More than one race	4
All operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Origin <sup>2</sup>	8

See "Census of Agriculture, Volume 1, Geographic Area Series" for complete footnotes, explanations, definitions, and methodology.

- Represents zero. (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

<sup>1</sup> Universe is number of counties in state or U.S. with item. <sup>2</sup> Data were collected for a maximum of three operators per farm.