

SB 257
Testimony in Support
Helle Ruddenklau
Ruddenklau Farms

Chair Wagner, members of the committee,

My name is Helle Ruddenklau. I'm a farmer from Amity and I'm here today to urge you to support Senate Bill 257. This bill asks for an additional \$30 million for what is known as the OSU Statewides. These include the Extension Service, the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Forest Research Laboratory.

As farmers, we rely on the unbiased, scientific research coming out of OSU. I want to highlight one area we are pretty excited about, and I think you should be too! Climate change is a topic at the top of the agenda in Oregon today. One way to mitigate climate change is to capture carbon out of the atmosphere and safely store it as organic matter in the soil, a process known as carbon sequestration. As farmers we can do this by planting cover crops and combining it with a method called no-till where we don't plow or disturb the ground between planting different crops. No-till also reduces erosion, increases water holding capacity and improves soil health. Furthermore, we sharply lower fuel consumption, by reducing the number of times we have to drive across the field.

However, the limiting factor to our success with no-till is slugs. These critters love it when we no-till. We create the perfect habitat for them and they are hard to control. In response to that, OSU hired a slug expert. Dr. Rory McDonell has been successful in identifying spearmint oil as being very toxic to slugs. He has also found a native nematode right here in Oregon which is a natural enemy. These are two promising control methods and both are environmentally friendly. We hope to get them commercialized soon, so we can use them in our fields. By the way, as they are natural products, these would be allowed in organic production as well. Finding a way to effectively control slugs will increase the use of no-till in Oregon thereby pulling more carbon out of the atmosphere and into the soil.

This is the type of research we only get from OSU. You can help protect Oregon's environmental and economic future by investing in the Statewides.