

Submitter: Kip Krebs

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

I am a fourth generation sheep and cattle rancher. I have spent my fair share of herding sheep for the ranch, either because a shepherd was sick or because we were short of herders for a brief time. I have experienced herding before cell phones where your day mostly consisted of stacking rocks into man sized pyramids, taking hour long naps under trees, and wondering what to make for my next meal. Then I herded sheep in the era of the block phone where I would spend my day playing Snake, 21, stacking rocks, taking naps, and wondering what I might make for my next meal. This was before texting was invented, therefore to keep in contact with your friends; you actually had to make a phone call. I would call up my college friends and ask them how their summers were going. Shepherding today with a Smartphone goes something like this: playing candycrush, google earthing yourself, facebook, twitter, bidding on junk on ebay, texting anyone who will text you back, taking naps, and wondering what you might make for your next meal. Even though it is way easier to entertain ourselves and stay connected to friends and family, the actual herding of sheep has been the same, whether it's grazing an open meadow in the mountains or grass circles in the Willamette valley.

The time line of our operation is:

We start our year off with shearing on January 15th, which lasts about three days. Lambing starts around January 20th. The birthing process which lasts about three weeks is done in a shed because the weather can get minus 10 at times. Then the sheep are either turned into small fenced pastures, or turned out on range, depending on feed availability. The sheep are usually done lambing of the 15th of March. We will then dock the lambs in the second half of March. In April-May the pairs are on grass desert type range ground, or grazing crop aftermath for dry land wheat farmers, in which they would be under some kind of electric fence/open range production. In the middle part of May the sheep are trucked up to the forested mountain ground. The first piece of land we use is surrounded by cattle fence, so the sheep are still herded and put in a night pen at night because of predators such as coyote, bears, cougars, and the Canadian gray wolf. We then wean and ship the lambs in August. The ewes will stay on the mountain until October then they are shipped to grass and or alfalfa circles between the mountain country and the desert country. The circles are fenced using three strand electric fence; this prevents sheep from wandering on to adjacent fields, as well as getting a more consistent graze on the field they are in. The shepherd's job is to up keep the fence, haul water if need be, animal health, and depredation , like coyotes and rebel town dogs. The last step is to truck the sheep back home the first part of January to get them on better feed because they are in the last stage of pregnancy and they need more nutrients/energy. Then the sheep shearers (also H2A) come back and shear the

sheep to start the production cycle again.

That is a very brief snap shot of how one ranch raises sheep. It also does not include other factors like drought, grass seed prices, alfalfa prices, guard dog management, BLM and Forest service regulations etc. Sheep production relies on electric portable fencing used as a tool to help the herder. So much of the time the sheep are behind a fence and no actual labor is needed. In most cases Sheep herders do not have drivers licenses. They like to stay in their own private sheep camp where they can watch their TV and call their family. While still technically on duty they are not working. It would take one entire extra employee to cart them from the mountains into the ranch which at some times of the year it would be as long as two hours each way to do that. I am not even talking about the fuel involved to do that.

Please consider all of the facts. I encourage you to make Agriculture workers exempt.
Kip Krebs