

Submitter: Jason Gentemann
On Behalf Of: Oregon Chicken Industry
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB85

Dear Legislators,

I would like to submit that I am opposed to legislation that stops the permitting of CAFO's in the State of Oregon. I have spent most of my life in Oregon and around agriculture. I earned a degree in Animal Science from Oregon State University and now manage operations for Foster Farms. Oregon already has a permitting system for CAFO's that is sufficient. This issue is nothing more than a handful of people that do not want to live next to a chicken farm and the special interest groups that have attached themselves to this campaign by spreading false accusations about our industry. These are the same special interest groups that have been trying to stop new chicken CAFO's for 20 years in Oregon.

It seems that for some reason many people seem to think that poultry farming is something new to Oregon. The fact is poultry farms have been here for several decades. The poultry industry in the PNW was once largely ran by small family farms that used chicken farming as a supplemental income to either larger farming operations, or outside employment. Just as other agricultural industries have grown and consolidated, this was inevitable within poultry as well. For some reason though, many think that the poultry industry is made up of huge conglomerates with no local ties or local concerns. The truth though is that while yes, the farms may be becoming larger, these are still family owned and ran farms. Growth is needed by these families though to make up for those who have retired out the industry.

Another key point is how far the technology has come. These new chicken barns are so much more energy efficient, with much better animal environments than what they are replacing. We can produce more food with less energy and less environmental impact than we could ten years ago. It is counter intuitive to stop the ability to build these new and improved farms. We live in a society where we upgrade our technology all the time. Why would we then choose to rely on decades old technology and building practices to produce the very food we eat? If we are truly concerned for the environment, why would we not take advantage of newer trends designed to produce less waste?

Allowing more chicken farms will allow more space for the chickens and less work for the farmers. There are no plans to increase processing capacity at our processing plant. So having more farms does not mean more chicken and more manure. It just allows us to put less chickens in the barns and have more time between flocks.

In the end, these farms will produce healthy, affordable family food, and do it in a way that is so much better all the way around. Better for the animal, better for the environment, less waste and less energy use. This industry is already here. We need to allow it to grow and change with the times. A simple look at the facts will show that holding this growth back will have widespread negative effects across our state and the whole of the PNW. Without locally grown poultry we will need to import all our chicken from other states. We will cause higher energy use and pollution trucking in all the protein needed to feed Oregon families. Not to mention the increased cost on families to do so.

Some would have you believe that locally produced poultry is exported. The truth is that most locally grown poultry here in Oregon is processed just north of our border in Kelso, WA. The chicken grown here feeds families here. Period.

I urge you to allow the continued growth of this vital industry within our borders.