

Submitter: Neil Moffett

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

Dear Chair Golden, and Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Neil Moffett and I live and work on our newly-founded family farm in Scio, in Linn County.

I am writing to you today in support of a factory farm moratorium in Oregon. We must take action to halt the expansion of factory farming in our state until we have protections in place for the environment, animal welfare, family farms, and frontline communities.

I raise livestock "on pasture", meaning we don't confine the animals in feedlots or even a barn, and all our ruminants are grass fed. Our animals' manure improves the fertility of our soil and they are thus a net benefit to local ecology, especially as we don't spray any toxic chemicals on the pasture. While it would be best if all livestock were raised this way, I am not concerned about the kind of normal-sized, family-owned feedlot that has been around for generations. We need laws that differentiate between a normal feedlot or chicken farm of the kind that have been in our communities for generations, and what this bill calls "industrial confined animal feeding operations". Anyone with common sense knows that there is a big difference in impact, ecological and otherwise, between the two, and we need laws that reflect that difference.

Our farm buys local inputs and sells our meat locally. Naturally-raised meat is not a fad for rich people: it is for anyone who cares about their health and how farming affects the local ecology. Some of our customers are single moms, or new families on SNAP trying their best to make sure their young children get the best nutrition possible. We provide discounts to nursing moms and local families with children to feed. Small family farms enhance economic stability and food security. What's more, small family farms bridge the urban-rural sociopolitical divide which has become a cancer eating away at the American polity. Most of our customers live in cities, and they enjoy being able to visit the farm, bring their children, and learn where their food comes from. We have customers from a variety of different backgrounds and beliefs, and while social atomization and political divisions have convinced people that they have no common ground with "the other side", what coming together around our farm community has shown us is that, in fact, we all have a lot in common. You will never get this kind of community-building and local investment from a factory farm that is shipping much of its product out of state or out of the country and is sending its profits to out-of-state investors.

The single major challenge to our farm business and limit on our ability to fill orders is the severe lack of local meat processing. Factory farms monopolize meat processing infrastructure and make it harder for independent farmers to find processing. They also attract more contract-only processing facilities to the state that are then not open to other farmers. These facilities disincentivize plants from working with small farmers like me, limiting my options even more. Our pigs, raised outdoors, help to clear invasive weeds and brush and thus mitigate wildfire risk. However, in order to get our pigs processed at a local USDA facility we have to book processing dates 12 months or more in advance. This has meant we have to turn away potential customers who can't wait that long. Even if we don't need a USDA inspection and can take an animal to a state-inspected facility, it can take months to get a processing date.

I urge you to vote for SB 85 in the 2023 Legislative Session to protect our small and midsized socially and ecologically responsible family farms in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Neil Moffett
Anchor Ranch Farm
Scio, Oregon