

To: Senate Natural Resources Committee  
From: Donna Reynolds  
Re: Support for SB85, the factory farm moratorium bill

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

My name is Donna Reynolds and I live in Hillsboro, Oregon. I support a factory farm moratorium in Oregon because I believe it's an important step toward a healthier, more compassionate community and a cleaner, more livable environment.

### **Farmers and Testimony**

I've listened to much of the verbal and written testimony, and I was most interested in those people who are *against* SB85, as I really wanted to know *why*. I imagined that I was someone who had to vote on this bill so I really delved deep as there were those who seemed equally adamant both for and against this bill. Why?

Naturally, those who felt this bill would directly harm their businesses were the most passionate about this bill—so there were farmers on both sides! It appears that the small farmers are *for* SB85 and against CAFO's as besides operating with more crowded conditions for the animals and causing more pollution, the small farmers are afraid the larger CAFO's will muscle them out of business. Whereas the medium to large existing CAFO's/farms *don't* want a moratorium because they say they need to continue to expand just to stay in business and this moratorium would restrict them too much.

Both small and large farmers—whether for or against the moratorium—also mention that farming has been in their family for generations, that even though money is tight, they feel an obligation and a sense of pride to continue to provide this much-needed and healthy food to their fellow Oregonians, and that “No one cares more about the land and animals than farmers do.”

### **Generational Farms**

Although all this is true from the farmers' viewpoint, again, I wanted to “dive deep,” so wanted to examine these statements from another angle. Just because a family has been in a business for generations doesn't mean it's sensible or profitable or beneficial for it to continue, as families who made horse-drawn carriages or sold typewriters or grew tobacco soon discovered. And families in the dairy business have to face this now as from 2003 to 2021, “the U.S. has lost more than half of its licensed dairy operations” (1) as plant milks have become wildly popular. So as more and more room is made for the non-dairy products on grocery shelves, it seems a positive step to have a moratorium on CAFO's to reassess the situation of these generational family-run dairies.

### **Needed, but Nutritious?**

Americans—and farmers especially—are told repeatedly how essential and delicious meat and dairy items are in our diet. So it's no surprise that farmers feel a sense of

responsibility to continue to provide these items to the best of their ability and to oppose anything/anyone that would stop them from doing that. There's no argument that food is needed in Oregon as 407,840 people are facing hunger in this state or put another way, 1 in 10 people and 1 in 8 children face hunger. (2) But are meat and dairy farms the answer? Especially when comparing 100 grams of beef to 100 grams of beans and beans provide the same amount of protein, more fiber, more iron, more calcium, more magnesium, less cholesterol, are 1/6<sup>th</sup> the cost, and use 1/14<sup>th</sup> the water to produce. (3) Why use all that extra land, water, and time by growing the feed and then raising and slaughtering the animals when you can get all you need directly from the plants themselves? Why not grow helpful, oxygen-giving plants instead of harmful, methane-producing cows?

### **Cancer Causing**

The meat and dairy industries have done a fantastic marketing job of saying how great their products are and how we need them to have a properly balanced diet. But this is not true. Sadly, it's just the opposite. The World Health Organization has classified red meat as Group 2A—probably carcinogenic to humans, and processed meat as Group 1—*carcinogenic to humans*—yet we serve it to our kids in their school lunches! Eating red meat has also been associated with colorectal, pancreatic, and prostate cancer. (4)

Dairy products, especially cheese, are no better, having contributed greatly to the obesity problem in the US. In fact, obesity-related conditions such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer are among the leading causes of preventable, premature death. (5) Obesity was also a factor in the number of deaths that occurred during the COVID pandemic.

### **Land**

Farmers say they care about the land but their actions—or the actions of their animals—say otherwise. The enormous amount of manure produced by factory farms often exceeds what crops can absorb, causing manure to run off into waterways. And the amount of methane produced by Oregon's 11 mega-dairies produces the same as the emissions from 318,000 cars on the road.

### **“Loving” the Animals**

Lastly, farmers say they care about their animals and “We love our cows.” I don't deny that this is what farmers actually think, since they feed and care for their animals and depend on them for their income. But what a strange kind of “love” it is. First, a farmer inseminates the dairy cow—about four different times in her lifetime. She carries each calf for nine months—just like humans—and then gives birth. But instead of suckling her newborn baby until it is weaned, the farmer takes the calf from the mother within hours or days, ignoring the mother who cries and bellows for her baby, and then the farmer takes the milk from the mother that was meant for her calf. The calf is isolated in a pen for days, weeks, or months. If female, it must endure a life like its mother of having its babies and milk continually taken from her. If male, who can't give babies or milk to the farmer—it gives its life instead—as veal. Of course, the lives of his mother and sister are not much longer. Instead of a full 20-year lifespan for a cow, most dairy cows are

“spent” and stop giving as much milk as they used to after just four or five years, so they’re then slaughtered for hamburger meat. This is how farmers “love” their cows. Strange.

Males born to a laying hen are of even less value than a male dairy calf and are ground up alive or otherwise disposed of at one day old, as soon as their sex is determined. Male and female broiler chickens live their entire lives inside, never seeing the sun, often growing too heavy for their legs to support them, and are killed at just six weeks old. They can be in a shed with up to 20,000 other birds making it a prime situation for disease to start and spread.

### **A Better Way**

So after this deep dive, after listening to the farmers who were against SB85, who had money issues with their family farms, yet who wanted to continue to provide food for Oregonians because they “love their animals,” I had to believe there was a better way. I had to believe that we, as humans, have evolved beyond having to accept this unprofitable, unhealthy, polluting, and cruel way of life. Fortunately, there is something better.

When you grow asparagus, you’re not growing an addictive, fatty food that will make your consumers gain weight and develop diabetes. When you grow hemp, you’re not overflowing streams with manure. When you grow mushrooms, you’re not taking a newborn calf away from its mother and when you grow chickpeas you’re not harming any baby chicks.

Animal agriculture harms our health, pollutes our planet, and is violent toward animals. It’s time to investigate alternatives such as growing hemp, mushrooms, hazelnuts, organic vegetables, baby greens in a greenhouse, etc., etc., etc. It’s also time to reduce subsidies going toward the meat, dairy, and egg industries, and introduce or increase subsidies for those who grow fruits, vegetables, nuts, mushrooms, etc.

Establishing this moratorium would be a much-needed start to creating a healthier Oregon. I urge you to please vote for SB85 in the 2023 legislative session in order to protect our health, our environment, and the animals. Our very world depends on it!

Thank you,

Donna Reynolds  
[reynolds@hevanet.com](mailto:reynolds@hevanet.com)

### Sources:

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