

HB 2730 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Action Date: 03/31/25

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
(Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 9-0-0-0

Yeas: 9 - Boice, Hartman, Helm, Levy B, Marsh, McDonald, McLain, Owens, Scharf

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/17, 3/31

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes a beginning farmer and rancher incentive program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Detailed Summary:

Establishes the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Incentive Fund (Fund) in the State Treasury, appropriates \$400,000 into the Fund, and establishes the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Incentive Program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to support beginning farmers and ranchers in Oregon. Directs ODA to, through rulemaking, prescribe:

- participation eligibility criteria
- participation terms and conditions
- incentive types that may be provided which may include loan repayment subsidies, stipends, and scholarships for specified higher education programs
- criteria for funding prioritization
- financial penalties for individuals who fail to comply with established terms and conditions

Authorizes ODA to contract with one or more public or private entities to administer the Program or parts of the Program and specifies that ODA may receive gifts, grants, or contributions from any source for implementation. Directs ODA to award scholarships for the next academic year by April 1.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Timelines associated with the academic calendar
- Provisions of the measure

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment adds an appropriation of \$400,000 from the General Fund for deposit into the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Incentive Fund and revises the deadline for the Oregon Department of Agriculture to award scholarships for the upcoming academic year, moving it from September 1 to April 1. It declares an emergency and becomes effective on passage.

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Census of Agriculture estimates there to be approximately 70,000 producers in Oregon with an average age of 58 years. The increasing age of agricultural producers is of interest to farm policy discussions, as it represents an indicator of how and when farm operations will be transferred to the next generation of producers. New and beginning producers, i.e. those with less than 10 years of experience, constitute between 20-43 percent

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of Oregon's producer population. While new producers are most heavily concentrated in Deschutes, Crook, Josephine, and Jackson counties - where they account for over 40 percent of all producers - they are active in every county of Oregon.