



Friends of Family Farmers ♦ PO Box 751 ♦ Junction City, OR 97448

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Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash and members of the committee:

My name is Alice Morrison and I am here on behalf of Friends of Family Farmers. Friends of Family Farmers, or FoFF, represents 1600 small and midsize, highly diversified and local market farmers around Oregon. I am speaking today in support of SB 809 and urge you to vote yes on this crucial piece of legislation.

Meat processing bottlenecks have been a problem in Oregon and across the country for decades and processing remains one of the most consolidated industries in the country. According to the Open Markets Institutes recent study, more than half of the poultry processing capacity in the country is controlled by just 4 companies (Tyson, JBS, Perdue, and Sanderson) and according to the National Chicken Council in 2019, 9 out of 10 chickens raised in the US are raised in a contract farming system. All this comes together to place an economic incentive on processors to work with these large companies instead of independent growers not funnelling their product into aggregated supply chains. This has led to reports of 12 month wait times for processing dates from our farmers, termination of small farm relationships with larger plants, and lost sales and delayed growth for our small farms. The demand is there, but we need more legal pathways for our farmers to get their chickens to market.

This is where the State Meat inspection Program and the expansion in SB 809 come in. The expansion of the State Meat Inspection program detailed in SB 809 allows farms more choices in processing, and all meat processed in these facilities must be sold within Oregon. This creates an incentive for state inspected businesses to work with local, independent producers and create better supply chains for our community food systems. It also provides more flexibility than the current ODA poultry inspection and allows for more farm businesses to scale up and enter new markets. Currently there are three pathways for legal processing in Oregon. The 1,000 bird exemption allows farmers to slaughter up to 1,000 chickens that they have raised on their property for sale whole, directly to the end consumer. For retail sales, poultry producers may each process up to 20,000 birds per year that they have raised themselves in a state-licensed facility that meets state sanitation requirements. If a producer operates under the Small Enterprise Exemption (slaughter and cut-up only; also limited to 20,000 birds per year), they may purchase live birds raised by other producers, process them, and sell those birds back to the producers, who can then act as distributors. If anyone would like to exceed this 40,000 per year total, they would need to obtain USDA inspection status. The new inclusion of poultry in the state meat inspection program would enable operations currently operating on the state-licensed program to ramp up production for their current, in-state distribution. These producers know they can sell more poultry and feed more people in their current markets, but have not been able to grow to USDA status, the state meat inspection program provides a good alternative and a next step in the process.

This is a step in the right direction and we applaud the work of ODA in correcting this exclusion from the program. Our producers are very excited about the expansion and we look forward to the greater availability of local food it can bring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice Morrison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alice Morrison
Co-Executive Director
Friends of Family Farmers