



February 2, 2026

Senate Bill 1539 / Oppose

- **This would allow lay individuals to perform pregnancy evaluations of cattle.**

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Committee Members,

Pregnancy evaluation of cattle is defined in Oregon as the practice of veterinary medicine.

Veterinarians are licensed, regulated, and must meet specific standards of care, meet defined education requirements, including ongoing education, have been tested for competency, and must have malpractice insurance. Veterinarians are regulated by the Oregon Veterinary Examining Board (OVMEB).

Concern for education and training of lay individuals - SB 1539 states that the Department of Agriculture may, by rule, specify circumstances under which unlicensed persons

- There is no standardized or accredited program for lay individuals to provide these services. may perform evaluations. Many courses that are offered are typically a limited weekend course.
- There is no detail on oversight or requirement for malpractice insurance to safely and effectively perform pregnancy evaluations.
- Treatment for open cows (not pregnant) frequently includes prescription drugs or procedures limited to a licensed veterinarian. Culling the cow is another option.
- The Department of Agriculture is not the appropriate oversight entity for the provision of animal medical care. That is the responsibility of the OVMEB.

Concern about undetected disease spread

- A lay person lacks the training and knowledge of reproductive diseases and is unable to help prevent or minimize diseases when they occur. This enhances the risk of misdiagnosis and greatly hinders responding to a cow's medical condition in real time.
- The lay individual also is less likely to understand and recognize biosecurity measures necessary to control and minimize spread. This could include reproductive livestock diseases, some of which are zoonotic, but also other transmissible diseases such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and New World Screwworm.
- Many diseases causing failure to conceive or abortion are also zoonotic (humans can be infected).
- How can a veterinarian provide necessary treatment to an open cow, including prescription drugs, when they have no knowledge of the reliability or accuracy of the lay person preg checking the cow?
- Veterinarians work closely with the Oregon Dept of Agriculture – Animal Health to monitor and report livestock diseases. They are the first line of protection in minimizing the spread of disease. The further removed veterinarians from the farm or ranch, the greater the risk of diseases going undetected.

Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)

- VCPR Requirements: Federal and state laws require annual veterinarian examination or farm visit for establishing and maintaining the VCPR, which is mandated to prescribe medications and administer treatment – and also evaluate pregnancy status.

- Without an established VCPR, cattle owners will have difficulty finding emergency services, accessing necessary medication, and care.

Concern for rural veterinarian shortages - While the purpose of this bill is to address concerns about access to care for Oregon's dairy and beef cattle, we believe that it would have a negative effect on rural veterinary care.

- Herd health and pregnancy evaluation are the primary reasons veterinarians visit a farm or ranch.
- Unlicensed individuals performing these services could further reduce the supply of veterinarians and provide no incentive to bring more practitioners into the field.
- Oregon law already allows for cattle owners and their employees to preg check their own cows and test them with non-invasive chemical tests that provide simple yes or no test results about a cow's pregnancy status. It does not allow for an unlicensed and unregulated person to sell their pregnancy checking services.

Options for cattle producers - It is important to remember that all 50 states, including Oregon, allow producers and their employees to preg check their own beef and dairy cows – and we support this.

- In Oregon, ORS 686.040 provides for this exception – *if the person is not selling their services*. This statute ensures that if a person is performing these services for a fee the individual is licensed and regulated, and the consumer is protected.
- Senate Bill 1539 would remove this level of protection and accountability by creating a system where unlicensed individuals are selling professional medical services to clients without any oversight (i.e., standards of care, including recordkeeping) or requirement for animal welfare, animal handling training, continuing education, and liability insurance.
- There also is another option available to producers – most likely those with a few cows or a small herd: a non-invasive blood or milk test in the event the producer did not have access to a veterinarian to provide pregnancy determination in their animals.
 - This non-invasive chemical test is a simple Yes or No (pregnant or open) and is relatively accurate on heifers and cows.
 - Further evaluation of the cow that would provide more detailed information, such as pathology, twins, fetal viability, etc. would require a veterinarian within a valid VCPR to provide medically appropriate interventions.

Governor Kotek vetoed similar legislation in 2025

- In her veto letter, the Governor raised many concerns that we have raised. [LINK to Letter](#).
- She encouraged “continued conversations about how to meet the needs of rural Oregon while also ensuring the health of our cattle statewide.” Since 2019, the OVMA has offered to meet with the various stakeholders to address this important concern, and we remain committed to doing so today.

We ask that oppose Senate Bill 1539 and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Glenn

Glenn M. Kolb, Executive Director
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association

