

Submitter: Christine Anderson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Hello!

I am excited to see this topic taken up by our legislature. Clearly, it is a topic that Oregonians are interested in discussing and working to find a resolution to.

I run a small 20 acre farm in Yamhill County. I have also lived and worked abroad in various agritourism situations, like in Italy where they value their farms and engagement with the public via workshops, classes, tours, u-pick, farm stay, farm to table dinners, etc., etc.

As a farmer, my first goal was always to produce a high quality product but my secondary goal has always been to connect our values and ideals and our farm to the community by inviting people to get to know us and how our farm works. This is also an avenue we use for additional income to support the types of high costs that come with running a farm in the 21st century (equipment, software, insurance, high cost of land, etc., etc.).

We NEED a solution that covers all counties that allows farms big and small the right to apply for a permit to use their farm to engender that community connection while also providing an extra income source. Farming is not easy as it is. Additional farming income avenues will be the thing that allows farms, especially small farms the opportunity to continue working at solvency. I think the \$10,000 over 2 years amendment for small acreage is a viable way for a farm, even a small farm to find access to these additional expansion opportunities. Too long has Oregon been a hodge-podge of various agritourism rules across the various counties. We need a state wide solution. This one might not be the perfect solution for every operation, but it is a lot closer than we have ever been.

For our operation specifically, I would like to see this also expanded to include VLDR districts where farming is also encouraged. Our farm is split amongst more than one property tax lot (some zoned EF and some zoned VLDR), and we would not be able to take advantage of this bill because it is only embrative of EF land and excludes those VLDR lands that are viably being used for farming. Adding an amendment that includes farmed VLDR land would allow access of more small farmers that lie within the borderlands between cities and the country the opportunity to include agritourism into their operations to the overall benefit of all Oregonians.

This is an important topic. Thank you for working to find a solution for us small farmers.