

3/8/2017

Senate Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Senate Bill 197

Dear Senators,

My name is Rebekah Welters(Gourley) and my family has an organic dairy farm in Scio, Oregon where we milk 150 mainly jersey dairy cattle. I am writing you today to urge you to vote NO on SB197 that would require the Environmental Quality Commission to adopt by rule a program for regulating air pollution from dairy confined animal feeding operations(CAFOs).

My grandfather was a proud dairyman, and so is my father. We take great pride on our farm and the high quality milk we produce for families not only here in Oregon, but across the United States. When you sit down for breakfast and pour milk on your cereal, or into your coffee, many people do not think about the hours of hard work and dedication that went into producing that glass of milk. Just like we put hard work into producing high quality milk for high quality dairy products, we put hard work and dedication into protecting the environment we farm in. Dairy farmers like us are consistently implementing new ways to reduce our environmental impact and increase our sustainability. On our farm we choose to milk jersey cows do to their environmentally friendly qualities. According to the American Jersey Cattle Association:

"A 2010 scientific, peer-reviewed life-cycle assessment determined that for Jerseys and Holsteins to produce the same amount of protein, milkfat and other solids, the Jersey population needs 32% less water, requires 11% less land, produces less waste and uses substantially less fossil fuels with a 20% reduction in total carbon footprint. In terms of the amount of Jersey milk needed to produce 500,000 metric tons (1.1 billion pounds) of cheese, the reduction in carbon footprint is equal to taking 443,900 cars off the road annually."

Now this is not meant to give our Holstein counter-parts a bad rap, because all dairy farmers implement practices on their farms such as re-using water, no-till farming, and much more to lessen their impacts on the environment.

One final point I would like to make is that not all CAFOs are "factory farms" like Threemile Canyon Farms or the new proposed dairy in Boardman. A CAFO can be as small or even smaller than our 150 cow family farm. The financial burdens from new regulations will increase our cost of production and make it more difficult to meet regulatory requirements that we already do.

When you consider SB197 I urge to keep the dairy families of Oregon like ourselves in mind, and vote NO on this bill.

Sincerely,
Rebekah A. Welters(Gourley)
3rd Generation Dairy Farmer
Scio, Oregon