



Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
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SB 785 TESTIMONY

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE
SENATOR LAURIE MONNES ANDERSON, CHAIR

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Presented by
CHAD ALLEN, PRESIDENT
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association

My name is Chad Allen. I currently serve as the President for the Oregon Dairy Farmers Association headquartered here in Salem, representing 228 Oregon Dairies statewide. These multi generational farm families deliver the highest quality milk to the market everyday **under strict state and federal regulations**. I am a dairy farmer from Tillamook County where I reside and farm with my family.

In 2015, the milk produced on Oregon's dairy farms resulted in an economic contribution of more than \$474 million dollars (farm gate value before processing). The number of Oregon Dairies is directly related to the ability of each farm to withstand milk market price fluctuation against the cost of feed, labor, taxes, equipment and the ever changing regulatory burden from the state and federal levels.

It is imperative any new legislation passed this Session take into consideration the consequences to Oregon's Dairy Farmers and their ability to remain in business in Oregon.

SB 785 as written duplicates federal efforts to reform antibiotic use on the farm. In 2013, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) initiated efforts to promote the Judicious

Use of antibiotics in food-producing animals. These efforts included modifying the FDA-approved label to eliminate production uses (i.e. growth enhancement and feed efficiency) and bringing the remaining therapeutic uses—disease treatment, control and prevention—under veterinary oversight. These rules were implemented at the beginning of this year, changing how antibiotics are used by Oregon's family farmers and ranchers.

As a dairy farmer, I take very seriously the health of every one of my cows. I administer antibiotics under the care and direction of my veterinarian. Once a cow is treated, she is taken from the milking line and placed in what we term as the “hospital”. Her milk is discarded during the course of her treatment regimen. Once she has been deemed fit to return to the milking parlor, her milk is tested for any residue. If residues are found, she does NOT return to her place in the milking parlor until her test is clear. Every tank of milk that leaves my farm is tested by the truck driver before it is loaded. Once the shipment arrives at the processing facility, the full tanker is tested once again. If there is any antibiotic in the milk, the farmers whose milk is represented in the tank, are looked to and held financially responsible. Ultimately, the farmer whose farm the milk originated from is required to pay the damages to the other farmers whose milk was shipped in that container. The damages, depending upon the price of milk, can be several thousand dollars! This financial injury and existing regulation make the practice of ensuring the milk is antibiotic free JOB ONE to the dairy farmer. I can assure you, this is the practice on every dairy farm throughout Oregon.

Attached you will find an article published recently in *Dairy Herd Management*, an industry news source, which outlines the fact that in 2016 , “Just 350 tankers out of more 3.5 million loads of milk tested positive for drug residues in fiscal year 2016, ending September 30, according to the [National Milk Drug Residue Database](#). That’s a violation rate of 0.011%, the lowest level in 20 years and just one-eighth of the rate in 1997.”

The financial burden to the Dairy Producer who may have to comply with a State Specific Regulation concerning Antibiotic use could be the final blow to our industry.

Oregon was once home to somewhere around 1,000 dairy farms with local processors in every neighborhood. Today, the remaining 228 dairy farms have very limited options for the delivery of their milk with a very few processors. If a new producer wants to come into the

dairy sector, they must first secure a contract with a processor who will pick up their milk. It is for this reason the dairy industry does NOT see a great deal of growth and expansion. For the record, the Oregon Dairy Farmers Association has spoken favorably about the permit application for the new facility in Boardman. It is also important for this Committee to know that every dairy no matter the size is our member and we will fiercely work to protect and preserve every dairy in Oregon.

As a producer, I can attest that every new regulation, whether it is State or Federal, comes with a price. That price is our time, first and foremost. Many of us are struggling desperately to locate, hire and retain a reliable and dependable workforce. When we lack workers on our farms, we have to be everything to the farm. That means early morning and late afternoon shifts in the milking parlor, chores to keep the herd healthy, paperwork, interface with our processors for milk pickup, planting and harvesting the crops, discussions with our veterinarian (who we share with other farmers), caring for our families and our workers. Dairy demands that my work week is 24/7, 365 days a year. The limited time I am away from my farm directly correlates to if and whether I have reliable help on the farm. No other profession makes this type of demand on its practitioners. Thus, we are seeing family members declining accepting the obligations that come with saying “Yes” to joining the management team and acquiring the farm. The next generation is seeking a “work, life balance” not unlike other college graduates. If this session the Legislature wants to help Oregon’s Dairy Farmers, we would support your investment in additional research funds for Oregon State University and also making low interest loans available for the acquisition of technology so we can equip our milking parlors and barns with robotic technology.

The Oregon Dairy Farmers Association respectfully urges the Committee to oppose SB 785 and the dash one amendment.

Thank you for your time and attention.