

Dear Senate Committee on Health Care,

My name is Jason Ainslie, owner of Ainslie Farms, with two farms. One in Glide and one in Sutherlin. It's the largest rabbit meat producer in the northwest. We also produce pasture-raised chicken and pheasants. This year, we'll produce about 19,000 chickens. I'm in about 70 stores in Southern Oregon with my products.

I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 785. Using routine antibiotics all animals to prevent disease is not a practice that should be continued. It does not allow for the stronger animals to build their immune system up to combat the illness that are present. This only allows the bacteria to grow stronger as it adapts to the medication. This has been seen, tested and proven already.

Farmers will argue that it will hurt their bottom line on getting product to market. We do not use blanket meds on our farm and our profit margin keeps growing along with the demand for our product. People, stores and restaurants that we supply love knowing we don't use meds, and know where the product is coming from. Along with this people want to know that the proteins they are consuming are treated humanely. Being in a giant warehouse full of fecal matter is not humane and is why the need for meds. If you were stuck in a room with ten of your friends and defecated there for six weeks, I'm sure you would need medications as well.

The USDA has been doing studies for the Organic certification program and has found the following information:

"Although the majority of organic poultry producers already provide their birds with access to pasture, a number of commenters expressed concerns that this rule would create biosecurity risks if additional birds were put on pasture. AMS worked diligently to align the final rule with the best practices of Federal agencies focused on biosecurity and food safety, particularly with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Food and Drug Administration, and consulted with these agencies during the final rulemaking process. The final rule continues to allow organic producers to temporarily confine animals and birds when conditions could jeopardize their health, safety, or well-being, a practice that has been successfully implemented in the past. AMS also added additional flexibility for producers to determine conditions under which temporary confinement may be required."

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/OLPPEExternalQA.pdf>

In studying the mortality rate of conventional versus organic, pastured chickens they found the rate to be about equal.

"USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published statistics on organic egg production for 2013. APHIS found that average mortality in U.S. organic layer flocks was 4.9 percent at 60 weeks and 6.8 percent over the useful life of the flock. It also found that on more than half of all farms, mortality at 60 weeks was below 4 percent, while only 11 percent of farms experienced mortality rates greater than 10 percent. This same survey reported that about 66 percent of organic production is raised on pasture or with uncovered outdoor access while 35 percent had porches or covered outdoor access. Mortality was similar for organic and nonorganic farms."

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/OLPPEExternalQA.pdf>

Sincerely,

Jason Ainslie