



February 7, 2020

TO: Oregon Board of Agriculture  
c/o Karla Valness

RE: Resolution 310 Siting of agri-tourism, entertainment, activities and associated activities on agricultural lands

Friends of Polk County is a local citizen group that seeks to promote wise management of farm and forest land, a high level of livability in our urban and rural communities and a strong resource-based economy. Agriculture is a very important part of Polk County's economy. We are in favor of promoting agriculture via agri-tourism as long as it does not interfere with the long-term viability of farming on our best farm land. This requires some analysis of compatibility (including cumulative impacts) and limitation to accessory use.

Polk County rural towns would benefit from farm-to-table restaurants, bakeries, breweries, hotels and event venues. Towns have the necessary public services to support these facilities. Generally, farms do not. In addition, many roads in Polk County (including highway 99W) are used by farm equipment during the summer. Farm related use of roads in EFU zones should take high priority over use for public entertainment events.

We would like to stress the importance of evaluating the cumulative impacts that existing and proposed activities could have on area farm operations. We support the designation of a work group to develop specific guidelines and regulations.

Finally, we recommend that all commercial agri-tourism operations be required to submit a CPA certified report to the appropriate county on farm income and the accessory income from the agritourism activities annually. This is the most objective way to ensure that agri-tourism activities are subordinate to actual farm use.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Deumling,  
Acting President, Friends of Polk County