

Proponent Testimony on House Bill 183
Agriculture and Rural Development Committee
The Ohio House of Representatives
April 30, 2019

Chairman Koehler, Ranking Member Brent and members of the committee, the Ohio Poultry Association, the Ohio Pork Council, the Ohio Dairy Producers Association and the Ohio Cattlemen's Association are collectively submitting written testimony in support of House Bill 183, legislation sponsored by Representatives Susan Manchester and John Patterson. Our organizations believe this legislation is a useful measure in beginning to address the economic realities faced by younger farmers in today's agricultural economy.

The member farmers of our associations have always been and remain committed to providing safe, affordable, high-quality food not only for all Ohioans but consumers around the world. Many of your constituents who are the farmers of our state make significant contributions to communities throughout Ohio, such as:

- Ohio has more than 600 egg, turkey and chicken farmers who create nearly 20,000 jobs annually and generate nearly \$600 million in annual earnings for Ohio's economy. Ohio is also one of the largest egg farming states in the nation, producing \$9.5 billion eggs annually;
- Ohio's cattle farmers raise over 300,000 beef cows with a total value of cattle and calves of \$1.45 billion;
- There are nearly 2,000 dairy farms in Ohio that have an economic impact of \$2.35 billion;
- Ohio raises nearly 3 million hogs each year with an economic footprint of over \$576 million; and

Our organizations are also committed to helping cultivate the "farmers of tomorrow" by focusing on many activities that promote farming as a viable profession and lifestyle in our ever-changing economy. We think HB 183 can be a useful measure in this area by providing tax incentives, financial management and other crucial guidelines and assistance to young farmers seeking to make agriculture their full-time profession.

As Representatives Manchester and Patterson pointed out during their sponsor testimony, HB 183 is based off a program established in Minnesota in 2018. As you may know, farming is a very "capital intensive" industry and it can be rather daunting to potential younger farmers who might like to establish their own family farm or purchase an existing business of a retiring farmer. Our associations believe that HB 183 could be a useful measure in an overall "economic incentive program" to ensure that agriculture and farming in Ohio remains one of the main drivers of our state's economy.

While we understand that modest changes to the “as introduced” version of HB 183 will be forthcoming, our organizations would like to ask the legislature to keep discussing an issue that was raised by Representative Powell concerning the bill in her question at the April 9 committee hearing. The important issue of family farm succession was raised by Representative Powell at the hearing, mainly if HB 183 would apply in these succession situations. When our organizations brought HB 183 before our respective members in consideration of supporting this bill, an overwhelming majority of our members asked about this very issue, as many of them expressed a desire to create a positive economic climate for future younger farmers within their own families.

Our associations appreciated Representative Manchester’s response that the main purpose of the bill was to address situations outside of this area for opportunities for others to enter the agriculture industry. We certainly applaud this goal and commend the two sponsors for stepping forward to take a proactive step in providing incentives to make a career in farming and agriculture possible for many young Ohioans. However, even if it outside of the context of the contents of HB 183, Ohio’s agricultural community hopes there will be continued discussion and consideration on the family farm succession issue.

Chairman Koehler, Ranking Member Brent and members of the committee, thank you for allowing our organizations to collectively submit written testimony supporting HB 183. We are all united in working with Representatives Manchester and Patterson and the entire General Assembly in continuing agriculture’s positive influence on our communities throughout Ohio.

