



Substitute House Bill 33
Proponent Testimony - Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences - Multispecies Animal Learning Center

Devin Fuhrman, Chief Agriculture and Sponsors Relations Officer

Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
May 10, 2023

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you as a strong proponent of the Local Projects foregoing appropriation item 1956G7, to provide a \$10,000,000 in fiscal year 2024 allocated to Ohio State University for the Multispecies Animal Learning Center. This funding is critical for Ohio's agriculture industry to meet the ever-changing challenges facing our future. That is why the Ohio Farm Bureau is in the room today as our partners are also fully supportive of the proposed amendment.

My name is Devin Fuhrman and I serve as Nationwide's Chief Agriculture and Sponsor Relations Officer. Nationwide was founded by Ohio farmers in 1926 and since that time has remained committed to supporting and providing solutions to help advance American agriculture. Helping our customers thrive in today's competitive farm, ranch, and commercial agribusiness environment, Nationwide is proud to be the No. 1 insurer of farms and ranches in the U.S. We're also the exclusive property-casualty insurer for Ohio Farm Bureau, seven other state Farm Bureaus and two of the nation's largest farmer-owned cooperatives.

Today, I am asking for your consideration to support the appropriation included in Sub. House Bill 33 to The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences for support of a new world-class Multispecies Animal Learning Center. Nationwide and The Ohio State University share a rich and storied history of supporting the agriculture industry and the infrastructure that holds them together, aligned with the needs of the Ohio Farm Bureau and all Ag and Farm stakeholders. With a passion for protecting and advancing the lives of farmers, ranchers, and commercial agribusiness, this collaboration is a natural fit to develop solutions supporting and growing the agriculture ecosystem.

Nationwide and the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences are working together to encourage the development of new solutions that will help the future of agriculture to better understand, manage and mitigate risk. Our company has invested through the Nationwide Foundation in the Waterman Agricultural and Natural Resources Laboratory, which utilizes 261 acres on the Columbus campus to be the future of the College, the university, Ohio, and the world. This site just recently celebrated the ribbon cutting of the Controlled Environment Agriculture Research Complex which will help with extended growing season, reducing waste, and obtaining more high-quality crops.

The next priority is to begin the groundbreaking for the Multispecies Animal Learning Center, which will bring people and animals together for hands-on learning, public events, and Extension programming. Practicing and teaching precision agriculture in animal production are among the many motivations behind the center. As is having an appropriate setting for public discussions and research involving animal welfare and food production. Here is how this new center will benefit Ohio:

- This facility will allow the College to educate the general public on animal agriculture and its importance to the state of Ohio.
- It will provide a state-of-the-art teaching and extension facility for students and producers and support education for Ohio State students, K-12 students, and learners across the lifespan.
- The multispecies facility will support teaching in key STEM areas and work force development for the wide array of careers available in working with animals.
- It will allow simulation of issues and challenges facing the industry for research and extension.
- It will increase the ability to retain and recruit top talent in the agriculture industry to CFAES.
- The facility will expand the ability to partner with leading industries in animal agriculture from genetics and nutrition to manure management and disease mitigation.
- And increase the visibility of advances in animal agriculture to the next generation of students who represent the pipeline for agricultural careers.

The Nationwide Foundation has already contributed and pledged future support of the Multispecies Animal Learning Center. This is another example of public / private partnership benefiting Ohioans. Agriculture is a part of Nationwide's DNA, and we believe it's important to invest in resources that pave the way for a vibrant and robust food supply chain. The Center will be an incubator for those groundbreaking ideas, while furthering the workforce that serves animal production.

Again, thank you for thank you for the opportunity to come before you as a strong proponent of the Multispecies Animal Learning Center. I'd be glad to answer any questions today from the Committee.