



Animal Extremists Coming for Oregon Next to Criminalize Animal Agriculture

Following right on the heels of Colorado’s Initiative 16 is an extremely similar action taking place in Oregon. Initiative Petition 13 (IP13), or the “Abuse, Neglect, and Assault Exemption Modification and Improvement Act,” uses cookie-cutter style language in the same vein as Colorado’s Initiative 16. The language of Oregon IP 13 will criminalize basic animal husbandry practices such as artificial insemination and humane processing.

Animal extremists are behind this push and are leaning heavily on their platforms, social media, and public support to get IP13 passed into law – not actual animal industry professionals or animal welfare experts. As with Colorado’s initiative, the underlying language and motive comes from extremist ideology to entirely dismantle all animal agriculture, research, clothing, and even pets. Extremists believe animal ownership is akin to slavery and therefore abuse and conclude that they should not be in human care.

Dangerous Implications for Oregon Livestock

Similar to Colorado Initiative 16, Oregon IP13 gives special attention to redefining what “sexual assault” is when it comes to animals. One of the key changes this initiative would target is Section 6 ORS 167.333, which is one of the state’s animal cruelty laws.

Section 6 ORS 167.333 would be amended to add this subsection to the state’s definition of sexual assault of an animal which includes:

Our American heritage is important, vital and what we value most. Unfortunately, extremists are working to control farming and ranching, land use, and to restrict animal ownership.

As farmers, ranchers, sportsmen, livestock and pet owners, we need to stand up and protect our way of life.



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“(a) Touches or contacts, or causes an object or another person to touch or contact, the mouth, anus or sex organs of an animal or animal carcass for the purpose of:

(A) [a]Arousing or gratifying the sexual desire of [a person] either party; or

(B) Breeding domestic, livestock, and equine animals as defined in ORS 167.310; or”

Section 7 ORS 167.335 would amend the current 11 key exemptions of animal abuse to only having two exemptions. The definition in statute ORS 167.315 regarding the crime of animal abuse states: “(1) the person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causes physical injury to an animal.”

Current exemptions to this criminalization include livestock transportation, animals involved in rodeos, poultry production, animals subject to good animal husbandry practices, livestock slaughter methods, animals subject to good veterinary practices, fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife management, scientific or agricultural research that involves animals, reasonable activities for the control of pests or vermin, and reasonable handling and training techniques.

The only two exemptions that would be instituted or remain are:

(a) Situations of self- defense when it is necessary to defend against an apparent threat of immediate violence;

(b) Animals subject to good veterinary practices as described in ORS 686.030 (Acts constituting practice of veterinary medicine).

False Claims Made About Farmers and Ranchers

If IP13 passes, the language would ensure the complete destruction of animal agriculture, hunting, fishing, and wildlife management in the state of Oregon. The false pretext that extremists are using to promote IP13 is the claim that farmers are exempt from cruelty to animals. Proponents of IP13 are claiming that this change would simply hold everyone to the same standard.

According to IP13’s website:

“We believe everyone should be held to the same standards when it comes to animal cruelty, and hope that this initiative will radically improve the lives of our fellow earthlings.”

Veterinarian and Expert Animal Law Attorney Sets the Record Straight

This line of thinking is misleading according to Dr. Nancy Halpern who is a veterinarian, Partner and Chair with Fox Rothschild LLP, a firm specializing in Animal Law Practice. She says that animal agriculture is by no means exempt or above the law regarding animal cruelty or its legal consequences.

“They are exempt (only) to the extent that they practice good husbandry practices according to the law as it exists,” Halpern explains.

Under the current laws, farmers and ranchers who are found negligent or grossly negligent of animals in their care – not following good husbandry practices – can face criminal charges the same as anyone else.



Animal Extremists Behind the Scenes

David Michelson is the animal extremist behind IP13. He is serving as both Campaign Director and Chief Petitioner of IP13. A quick view of his LinkedIn profile shows that he is an Organizer for the animal extremist group Anonymous for the Voiceless. He is also a Guest Teacher in the Denver Public School System. In the past he worked for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment as a Statistical Analyst.

On January 9th, Michelson appeared on a Facebook livestream for Jane Unchained, a radical animal extremist group, where he formally introduced himself. In this interview, Michelson revealed his background in psychology and public health. Interestingly, it was after watching the highly publicized animal extremist propaganda film “Dominion” that he became a vegan and got involved in animal extremism work. This interview has been viewed over 1,600 hundred times, but trying to gain an audience on social media hasn’t ended there. To date, the “Yes on IP13” Facebook page has 232 likes and 237 followers, plus an additional 50 Twitter followers and a few more on Instagram.

While IP13 is its own movement, it is evident Michelson has connections to various other animal extremist outlets that could provide more exposure and support of this initiative. Among his IP13 page’s likes across social media include the Animal Save Movement, Sentient Media, the Vegan Society and FARM. Unsurprisingly, among them is the like-minded Colorado Initiative 16 (PAUSE).

Additionally, the primary website for IP13 is paid for by End Animal Cruelty, the committee behind the petition which Michelson heads up. As time goes on and IP13 gains more awareness, it is likely that other extremist groups may join with their support and promotion. IP13’s current social media followers include the Factory Farm Collective, a Canadian “investigative project,” the Animal Rights Collective, and the Lewis & Clark Student Chapter of the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

The Ultimate Goal of the Group Behind IP 13 is to End Animal Agriculture

On IP13s website, they also mention the interest this movement has to incorporate an animal’s “full life.” Their website states:

“(IP13) It would create a system in Oregon where farmers were no longer exempt from animal cruelty laws. It would require that animals be allowed to truly live a good life free from abuse, neglect, and sexual assault... After an animal lives a full life, and exits the world naturally and humanely, this initiative does not prohibit a farmer from processing and distributing their body for consumption.”

Make Oregon a Sanctuary State for Farm Animals and Set a Precedent for Other States to Follow

Michelson more recently made an appearance on March 26th on the public radio station KBOO Portland. The program, “Voices for the Animals,” discusses animal rights issues and interviews “front-line activists.”

Host Noah Bristol (a Portland-based animal extremist) made it clear from the beginning of the program



that such a change to current Oregon law would drastically change how animal agriculture does business in the state...if it could exist at all. Michelson echoed that the change in law would make Oregon a sort of “sanctuary state” for farmed animals. He notes that he is very interested to see how such a change could impact neighboring states as well.

Essentially, he was optimistic that this would make animal processing illegal in the state because it would make harvest fall under animal cruelty. This, he says, means that animals could live out there “natural lifespan” after which they could theoretically still be processed for food.

Future Plans to Push Animal Extremist Ballot Initiatives – They Will Not Stop

Another point Michelson made in his interview that gives him optimism is based on the women’s suffrage movement, which gave women voting rights in the state of Oregon by ballot initiatives. Even if this made it to the ballot and was voted down, Michelson stressed that this would not end the animal extremist activity in the state of Oregon.

“We’re going to keep putting it to the voters,” Michelson said, “until a new world is here.”

The IP13 Campaign is Aggressively Seeking Support

The IP13 campaign is one that needs to be diligently watched as it is very likely to gain more exposure over time. As seen in their online activity, they are making very aggressive moves to recruit more help and raise support for their mission.

One Facebook post from February 8th reads as follows: “Want to help us gather signatures from the comfort of your home? Sign up to be a volunteer...get-involved so you can be trained on remote signature gathering!”

On their pages they have made note that they are sending out petitions by mail to anyone who requests them. Under their site’s “Get Involved” tab, Michelson and his team state they are looking for several volunteer positions, including petitioners, social media, content creators, a fundraising specialist, and an outreach coordinator. The team has also begun to actively search for volunteers and have created a listing on Idealist, a virtual job and volunteer board, plus a few posts on subreddits like r/VeganActivism.

Seeking Nationwide Support Outside of Oregon

Michelson made it known on his KBOO interview that signatures don’t need to be gathered by someone in the state of Oregon. Additionally, minors can participate as well, which makes their likelihood of obtaining sufficient signatures very likely. He stresses that anyone in the animal extremist community can participate and help them in their cause regardless of where they live or their age.

Animal Husbandry Matters

Removing the stipulation that allows for certain activities under the pretense of “good animal husbandry” has some serious implications for animal agriculture. “A lot of these, ‘good husbandry practices’ have been developed over decades to protect animals and people,” says Dr. Halpern, “So many practices that protect animals would be eliminated.”



These include practices like dehorning cattle or breeding for those that are naturally hornless or polled. Without the ability to disbud animals, remove horns, or practice good breeding, there would be a detriment to animal welfare and human safety. Likewise, banding and castrating also fall into this category. Further, Dr Halpern said, "I don't see how anybody would be able to withstand this and continue their operation." She added that other industries, including equine and biomedical research, would also be unable to continue their practices.

Dr. Halpern communicated that Oregon looks to have really expansive animal welfare regulations and laws already in place. She also indicated that changes to animal welfare law, as with good husbandry, need to happen with science-based reasoning. Further Dr. Halpern stated she believes this is not the case with IP13, "Here we see an attempt to eliminate entire animal related markets and industries and people."

Keep A Close Eye on IP13 and Their Social Activity

Oregon animal welfarists and industry professionals should pay close attention to IP13 and its road to the ballot box because social media will play a big role in the distribution and promotion of its changes. It is imperative to stay up to date and to share relevant information.

Certain figures in the Oregon agriculture community, such as Derrick Josi of TDF Honest Farming, a dairy farmer and animal welfare advocate, have already started to speak on this issue and spread the word on the importance of good animal husbandry.

"It's clear the authors of this initiative have ulterior motives," Josi wrote on a recent blog post, "If their goal was to actually (to) 'reduce the suffering of animals and improve their quality of life' they'd venture out of their closed-minded lives to learn how we, and I speak on behalf of the vast majority of the agricultural industry, work tirelessly to improve our systems and processes every day to ensure we're providing the utmost quality care to our livestock."

Tools to Be Effective on Social Media Available from Protect The Harvest

Since social media plays such a big role these days in how animal extremist groups are influencing people, especially young people with their ideology and agenda, it is more important than ever to become proficient with the different platforms so that these groups are not able to control the narrative. A few simple steps can make time spent on these platforms more effective. To help with this, Protect The Harvest has created a downloadable and printable tutorial in an easy to understand format. It is available on our website under the "Get Involved Tab" – "Become a Social Media Volunteer." We encourage you to check it out even if you are experienced with social platforms. All of us must get engaged as these groups are becoming more emboldened. These activists have told us firsthand that they will not stop pushing their ideology and we must push back to protect our way of life.

