Ballot Measure 2-89

My views &
Potential impacts on OSU

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Speaking today as a citizen, not as an OSU professor

Nothing I say is meant to present a policy or action taken by OSU
My personal goal is coexistence

- Society and Benton County gains from diverse options and viewpoints
- Agriculture has a long history of successful coexistence — the issue is not a new one
- Let's do the work so we can continue to have many options, not one preempting another
Context

• Nearly all crops are highly genetically modified
  • Identified in one place, then highly and continually modified and moved all over the world – not “natural communities”

• These genetic changes are the basis of agriculture and our civilization

• Current biotechnology is continuing this trend with additional tools
My concerns with ballot measure

• **Badly written**: Wide-ranging but harmful and ambiguous on major elements
  - *What it says, not what might have been intended, will be law*
  - Legal analysis by OSU suggests that all research, all uses, and all patents could be affected

• **No exemptions**: Research or medical applications

• **High cost to county for lawsuits, enforcement**
  - Sets up independent regulations / legal rights that are in contradiction to Oregon and federal laws
    - State law passed in 2013 that banned local agricultural laws; violates Oregon right to farm law
    - Extensive federal regulation of GMOs by EPA, FDA, USDA
    - County must manage citizen lawsuits, control program
My concerns with ballot measure

- Harmful, uncompensated takings
- Will require farmers affected by the ban to rip up crops with no compensation for losses
- Will require ongoing and future research into medical treatments, environmental protections, and agricultural sustainability that uses biotech methods to be abruptly stopped — irreversible harm to OSU and community
- Dramatic effects on my own research that has trained and supported hundreds of students, supported dozens of researchers, brought in nearly 20 million dollars to OSU and the county, and is working to promote coexistence via new technology
- Does not do what it says: Does nothing to enhance our already vibrant local food system
Conservative analysis of impacts to OSU

- Could directly impact more than 120 faculty in 8 colleges
- Stop research valued at nearly $20 million per year
- Affect education of 300 - 400 students
- Impact 100 - 200 support university staff
Multiple uses of biotech methods in research and teaching at OSU

- Therapies for human diseases, including Lou Gehrig’s disease
- Many types of cancer research
- Agricultural diseases on Oregon crops, such as eastern filbert blight
- Improved environmental clean-up methods, including oil spills
Multiple uses of biotech methods in research and teaching at OSU

• Improved bioenergy and wood crops
• Safer uses of biotechnology
• Identification of endangered species and their unlawful sales, such as whales
• Educate students on state-of-the-art laboratory methods in biological science
Will foreclose all biotech crops, even those with large benefits

- 2014 scientific analysis of 147 journal articles
  - “[biotech crop] adoption has reduced chemical pesticide use by 37%, increased crop yields by 22%, and increased farmer profits by 68%...”
  - Kupper and Quaim, PLOS One, 2014

- Many new forms with big consumer and environmental benefits – such as the “Innate” potato
  - Higher yields, less spoilage and waste, healthier for people, less pesticide use
  - Only potato DNA used, to reduce consumer concerns
In summary

• Very badly, recklessly written
• Extremely harmful and costly to OSU and the county in numerous ways
• Against science – extensive evidence of safety and benefits, and much more coming
• We don’t need it – we have a vibrant local food system
Ballot measure sections

• Section 3. Statements of Law – Prohibitions Necessary to Secure the Bill of Rights
  • (b) It shall be unlawful for any corporation or governmental entity to engage in the use of genetically engineered organisms within Benton County
  • (d) It shall be unlawful for any corporation or governmental entity to require registration or patenting of open pollinated or traditionally-bred seed within Benton County

• Section 5. Enforcement
  • (c) Any action brought to remedy the violation of the rights of natural communities shall list the natural community as a plaintiff in the action; damages sought must bear a relationship to the damage inflicted upon the natural community, and awarded damages must be payable to the municipality for the restricted use of repairing the natural community to its condition prior to the violation
• **Section 8. Definitions**

  - (c) “Genetically Engineered Organism”: *Any organism*, organisms, or life forms, in which the genetic or self replicating material has been changed, engineered, modified or altered using techniques such as, but not limited to…[recombinant DNA]…

  - (g) “Trans-genetic risk seed”: Any seed, or crop produced from that seed… that has been genetically modified or patented …

  - (a) “Corporation”: Shall refer to *any corporation*, limited partnership, *limited liability partnership*, business trust, other business entity, or limited liability corporation organized under the laws of any State of the United States, or under the laws of any country.