

HB 1371

Chairman Thomas and House Agriculture Committee Members,

As young producers who are trying to begin our livelihood farming and ranching, house bill 1371 brings fear to my future. Fearful that a corporation with more monetary power than I can imagine would have open, unrestricted access to control land values, assets, and much more. Because of this monetary and resource rich power, a small-scale family farm like the one my husband and I operate, could be in danger. If this law were to pass, we would not be able to remotely compete with the various foreign and alien corporations that could choose northern Kidder County as their place to operate on. We already face daily challenges with outside investors, large scale farming/ranching operations, Game and Fish Program Incentives, and CRP program payments. Because there are already many barriers to success, I am fearful to what door this bill has the potential to open. As far as I am concerned, corporations are not in the search to partner with young farm families, but instead doing what corporations do best, better their bottom dollar and destroying anything in sight to make their profits.

According to this bill, any existing or newly developed corporations, including foreign and alien, would be able to own cattle backgrounding farms, cattle feedlots, produce poultry, poultry products, milk and dairy products, swine, or swine products. There would be no limitations on how many acres of land a corporation would be able to obtain. Yes, the bill states 160 acres per corporation, but it does not limit the number of acres each entity/corporation could withhold. For example, they could purchase 160 acres of land with their seemingly endless corporation money and name that "Operation 1". They then could then purchase an additional 160 acres and name that "Operation 2". This process could be continued over and over as this bill has no limitations. There is also lack of reporting and record keeping within HB 1371. Family operated corporations currently have more stringent guidelines and reporting requirements compared to what this bill has to offer.

Being a young producer in a state I desire to reside in for many years to come, I am worried that this bill would destroy farms and the hearts of small communities. I am fearful that non-family corporations could own cattle, hogs, dairy farms, and produce poultry. I urge you to study what current corporations are available to those who desire to form partnerships within North Dakota. There are safe practices where people are able to create partnerships with family and non-family members.

Although the intent of this bill is to improve animal agriculture, there are many other ways that our state can accomplish this with local funding for local people.

I urge the committee to not pass or recommend HB 1371 as it would have a direct negative impact on my livelihood. Overall, it lacks structure and opens the door to all corporations where vertical integration has the opportunity to take out our agricultural life as we know it in North Dakota.

Cassidy Lyngaas

Farmer/Rancher