

Ohio's Proposed Constitutional Amendment on Livestock Welfare

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Following a lengthy battle over the state's budget, the Ohio House and Senate agreed on by joint resolution on July 13, 2009 to place a constitutional issue on livestock care before Ohio voters this fall. Each legislative body had passed different versions of the proposal in the past few weeks. The final version adopted by the legislature proposes an amendment to the Ohio Constitution that:

- Creates the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board, to include:
 - The director of the department of agriculture, who shall chair the Board;
 - Ten members appointed by the Governor with Senate approval, as follows: one family farm representative, one member knowledgeable about food safety in Ohio; two members representing statewide farmer organizations; one veterinarian licensed in Ohio; the State Veterinarian; the dean of an Ohio college or university's agriculture department; two members of the public representing Ohio consumers; one member representing a county humane society; two family farmers appointed by the Speaker of the House and the Senate President.
 - No more than seven members of the same political party.
- Grants the Board authority to establish standards for the care and well-being of livestock and poultry, subject only to the authority of the Ohio General Assembly, and requires the Board to consider factors including but not limited to: agricultural best management practices, bio-security, disease prevention, animal morbidity and mortality data, food safety practices, and the protection of local, affordable food supplies for consumers.
- Delegates authority for administering and enforcing the standards to the department of agriculture.
- Gives the Ohio General Assembly the power to enact laws necessary to carry out the purposes of the constitutional amendment.

Ohio voters will decide on November 3, 2009 whether to adopt the proposed constitutional amendment.

View the joint resolution at http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/res.cfm?ID=128_SJR_6_EN.