

NMCGA on the Trail....

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A Step in the Right Direction

On June 21, 2021 the Colorado Supreme Court announced, in a 7-0 vote, that Initiative 16 would not meet the requirement of focusing on one subject within the proposed initiative. The proposed changes were broad and misleading with several aspects tied to it.

Initiative 16, also known as the "Protect Animals from Unnecessary Suffering and Exploitation" (PAUSE), was introduced to expand the definition of a "sexual act" when it comes to animal husbandry practices. Common methods for ranchers, farmers and veterinarians including artificial insemination, pregnancy checks and semen collection were a few of the topics up for debate.

In addition to the lengthy proposal animals would have been required to live 25% of their "natural" lifespan before beginning the harvesting process. PAUSE estimated that a cow will live to be 20 years old (harvested at 5 years old), a chicken 8 years old (harvested at 2 years old), a turkey 10 years old (harvested at 2.5 years old), a duck 6 years old (harvested at 1.5 years old), a pig 15 years old (harvested at 3.75 years old), a sheep 15 years old (harvested at 3.75 years old), and a rabbit 6 years old (harvested at 1.5 years old). (Colorado State Ballot Initiative Protect Animals from Unnecessary Suffering and Exploitation, 2021, p. 1).

The initiative was scheduled to make an appearance on the ballots in 2022. However, as of June 21st Initiative 16 does have another opportunity to reappear through the legislative council and the Title Board. Several other steps and approval would be required for its reintroduction such as the acknowledgement of the single-subject rule.

Unfortunately, Colorado is not the only state to have faced this issue. Oregon also announced, in the early months of 2021, IP13 titled the "Abuse, Neglect, and Assault Exemption Modification and Improvement Act".

IP13 has several similar components to the Initiative 16. Both address the term "sexual act" with an animal and focus on the proper animal age when the harvesting process occurs. The Oregon IP13 petition is still in the beginning phases. The state of Oregon will suffer significant economic losses along with a plethora of consequences if IP13 moves forward. The state profits \$5.01 billion in agriculture production with 67,595 agricultural producers (The State of Oregon Agriculture, 2021, p.2). IP13 will not only be a stranglehold on the agricultural community, but impact meat consumption for all Americans.

So, what's next? As producers, consumers and advocates it is our duty to continue the discussion surrounding Initiative 16 and IP13. Many consumers are unaware of where their meat is sourced and the people that work to provide food for our nation and the world. The continuation of transparency in communication will make the difference in the fight against these campaigns. Tell your agriculture story and tell it often!