

CLERK: LB 1071, Mr. President, a bill introduced by the Agriculture Committee. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 12 of this year, referred to the Agriculture Committee, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill at this time, Mr. President.

SENATOR HALL: Senator Dierks, on the bill, LB 1071.

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you, Mr. President, and members of the body. LB 1071 is the bee bill for this year, I guess. It amends the Nebraska Apiary Act so that responsibility for beekeeping education is shifted from the Department of Agriculture to the University of Nebraska. The Department of Agriculture maintains the responsibility for inspection and regulation but the education part of the beekeeping operation will be done through the university. It also alters the department's regulatory obligations. Regular routine inspections of beekeeping operations are eliminated. The bill limits inspection and certification requirements to operations selling 25 or more bee colonies within the state, or if the operator requested those exporting 25 or less colonies out of Nebraska. Registration with the department is still required of all beekeeping operations, and those which house more than four colonies are subject to a registration fee. This fee is changed by LB 1071 but not very significantly. Presently, the registration fee is \$7.50 plus a per colony fee of no more than 20 cents. LB 1071 changes the fees to be no more than 20 cents per colony with a \$5 minimum charge. LB 1071 also changes the fee structure for inspection and certification. Presently, this fee is \$5 plus a per colony fee of no more than 20 cents. Under the bill, the fee shall be set by rules and regulations and shall not exceed the following amounts. For 1 to 250 colonies, the amount would be \$200. For 251 to 500 colonies, the amount would be \$250. For 501 to 1,000 colonies, the amount is \$350, and it goes to \$450, if you have more than 1,000 colonies. You will note that these fees can represent a sharp increase for those operators which are at the lower end of the brackets. However, many operators will no longer be subject to inspection because they will not be selling or moving more than 25 colonies. LB 1071 will provide more efficient and effective service for the apiary industry and the cost of the program will be borne to a greater extent by those who are served by necessary inspections. In fact, LB 1071 will bring us closer to...move the apiary program much closer to its goal of being 50 percent fee funded and 50 percent state funded. LB 1071 also