

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

January 21, 1999 LB 172, 198

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: LB 172 is advanced to E & R Initial.

CLERK: Mr. President, (LB) 198, a bill introduced by Senator Dierks. (Read title.) Bill was introduced on January 11 of this year, reported to the Agriculture Committee for public hearing, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Dierks, you're recognized to open on LB 198.

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. LB 198 is a bill that was...that I introduced for the Soil and Plant Analysis Laboratory procedures that are taking place in our Department of Agriculture. Soil and Plant Analysis Laboratory results, or statutes, give regulatory authority to the Department of Agriculture to evaluate laboratories that are in the business of determining the composition of elements or compounds in the soil or in plants for the purpose of providing a basis for plant nutrient application, otherwise...other words, for fertilizer dealers to determine the amount of application necessary to take care of the deficiencies in the soil or in the plant. Currently, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture distributes check samples to laboratories and compiles all the analytical data submitted by the laboratories. LB 198 would amend the act by allowing the department to designate an authorized proficiency testing service to assume these laboratory testing functions. The language of the bill keeps final decision-making authority with the department on whether to contract with an outside service or to keep the testing function with the department. The bill provides the framework for proficiency testing. Laboratories will be required to participate in proficiency testing four times each calendar year, and they have to submit three soil samples and one plant sample, or vice versa, each quarter. The laboratory reports test results to the authorized proficiency testing service and these are forwarded to the department to determine whether laboratory analysis is accurate within acceptable range. Laboratories must be registered with the Department of Agriculture and must show that they met a minimum set of requirements relating to testing procedures, qualified personnel, quality assurance procedures, and any other criteria