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Transcriber's Office

March 23, 1999

LB 832-835

talked about a minute ago, there were some proposals that were emphasized as a way to reverse the negative effects on competitive pricing of agriculture products, and I'd like to just mention those to you. Proposal number one was that we support country of origin labeling for all meats. Proposal number two was to educate the public about market concentration. Proposal number three is to support mandatory daily price reporting. Number four is to encourage competition in the meat processing industry. And number five is support the prohibition of packer feeding of livestock. These proposals make up the contents of the legislation found in LB 832, (LB) 833, (LB) 834, and (LB) 835. And except for the country of origin legislation found in 834, these others have all been amended into committee amendment AM0814. The committee amendment is divided into five sections. The first three sections are general provisions applicable to the entire act. These sections name the act the Competitive Livestock Markets Act, provide definitions, and give legislative findings and intent. Sections 4 to 6 include the provisions from the original LB 833, prohibiting the owning, keeping or feeding of livestock by packers. These three sections are the heart of the matter. The USDA has interpreted the Packers and Stockyards Act by saying that packer feeding, in and of itself, does not constitute unfair competition, giving rise to USDA intervention. This, to me, is a foolish interpretation. What packer would not find monetary advantage in producing its own livestock? These three sections are nothing more than a statutory restatement of Article XII, Section 8 of the Nebraska Constitution, passed by the citizens, in the early 1980's, as Initiative 300. There are a number of situations where packers involvement in feeding livestock is evident. And you'll recall the Legislature has given considerable authority to the Attorney General to enforce this family farm initiative. The original LB 835 was introduced as the Livestock Price Discovery Act. It prohibits packers from purchasing or soliciting livestock in the manner which discriminates in prices paid or offered to livestock producers. The bill gives exception to different prices, based on the quality of the livestock, or on the cost of transportation or acquisition. These provisions are found, in large part, in Sections 7 to 16, and are applicable only to swine. In our work with many of the ag organizations, including the Nebraska Farmers Union, the Cattlemen, the Farm Bureau, the Center for