

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

March 27, 2001      LB 523

CLERK:    Mr. President, LB 523 was a bill introduced by Senator Wehrbein. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 11 of this year, referred to the Agriculture Committee. The bill was advanced to General File. I have committee amendments, Mr. President. (AM0649, Legislative Journal page 848.)

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.      Senator Wehrbein, you're recognized to open on LB 523.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN:    Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the body, I'm going to open today on LB 523, which is to get Nebraska into the Southern Dairy Compact. And I will admit to you up front that there is a lot of technicalities in this bill. The price of milk is...and the way milk prices are set today is under a federal milk marketing order, it's fairly complicated and, frankly, I may not be able to answer all the questions you might have. So I'm going to stay in the big picture, if you will, a broad perspective of the reason that I believe Nebraska producers should be allowed to vote to get into the Dairy...the Southern Dairy Compact. Before I start, I want to make a disclaimer and tell you that I filed a conflict of interest. Dairying income, the sale of milk, is important to my farm business that I share with my brothers and son and a nephew. So that you know, I have a conflict of interest. I intend to continue with this and to vote on the bill because I believe our dairy operation, in particular, is a minuscule part of the dairy industry in Nebraska and in this compact and in this country. So even though I recognize that I have a self-serving interest in this bill, I believe it is also broad enough to include all dairy producers and, in fact, this will include consumers, which hopefully all of you are consumers of milk. I'm passing out some things to set the stage for this bill and, first of all, I want to say that this, the intent of this, if this bill would pass, this will be petitioning to Congress to allow a Southern Dairy Compact that would extend from Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas, on south as far as the southeastern states, Georgia and so forth. It's undetermined at this time how many states there would be. There is presently in this country called the Northeastern Dairy Compact which is primarily made up of six New England states. That is the pattern. It was put in, in the 1996 farm bill, as a...I'll call it a pilot project or a...an