

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

March 16, 2004 LB 916

in this state, and still there's a lot of economic activity that is generated from livestock production in this state, and we've never incentivized that. Matter of fact, I would say that we've placed a lot of barriers to our livestock producers. As far as profitability, you can argue that all day long. I will tell you, up until last fall, most of the cattle feeders in the state went two years with mostly red ink on their lines. Now, there was some good money made last fall. Then the BSE issue hit, and now the price of cattle have rebounded, although the first two months of this year that was pretty questionable. It's a type of business anybody can get into if they want. It takes a little money, but there's a lot of lots out there that will say, if you want to buy some cattle and feed on our lot, we'll take your money, we'll take your livestock, we'll put in your lot, you furnish the feed and we'll see if you make some money--a lot of risk generated there. If there's anybody here who's interested in feeding cattle, I could probably hook you up with a pretty good operator, and then you can see how profitable it is. A lot of us here do feed cattle and sometimes in other people's lots, but it's a good way to consume grain in this state. We have several options what to do with grain in this state. We can either feed it, or we can make...in some cases we can make ethanol out of it, or we can ship it out of the state and let somebody else do the add on. But any time you can take that grain another step further and add on, you're adding value. And we want to add value in the state, and that's what livestock feeding is all about. I would hope that...actually, our pork numbers, if I'm not mistaken, over some recent years have declined almost 30 percent. We are driving the small pork producer out and what few operations are left are large ones, but they haven't adequately replaced the small number...the smaller operators. And, you know, I can have a meeting of my neighbors who don't want pork production, they don't want a large pork production area...facility in their area, but yet, if you'd go back 30, 40 years ago, everybody had a few hogs. That's not the way things are done anymore. It's not efficient. It probably does result in the type of product that you even want to consume. Most of the products that we produce right now, whether it be pork products or beef products, are certainly a much higher quality than what we had 30, 40 years ago. So it's a dilemma. I wish there was a LB 775 for livestock feeding