

April 3, 1979

LB 14

PRESIDENT: Motion carries. The committee amendments are adopted. Now we are ready for the bill itself. The Chair recognizes Senator Nichol.

SENATOR NICHOL: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I move for the advancement of LB 14 to E & R Initial. LB 14 is the Nebraska Dry Bean Resources Act. Now if you would like to, ladies and gentlemen, you can follow the white copy that was sent out today. That includes all of the committee amendments but it does not include the amendments to the committee amendments which are not of great importance. So if you would like to have a look at the bill as it stands mostly at the moment it is the white copy that was furnished you this morning. This act in itself, this act is a self-help act of the edible dry bean growers of Nebraska. There are approximately 1400 edible dry bean growers in Nebraska producing approximately 1.9 million hundredweight of dry beans. And speaking of measure, dry beans are always referred to as hundredweight rather than bushels with the exception of bushels per acre when you are talking about that. This is a relatively small industry with the majority of the bean growers in the western portions of the state. These beans have demonstrated an ability to grow in those areas of the state which currently produce sugar beets. In these areas it is usually not possible to grow soybeans or peanuts or some other crops that are grown in other areas. Therefore, as the sugar beet industry is on shaky ground at the moment in these areas, it is necessary or perhaps will be necessary to replace it with a crop that can be grown in that area. This could be the edible dry bean. As I mentioned, this is a self-help program for the edible dry bean growers. These programs are called checkoffs and under LB 14 a checkoff system would be established where a fee of hundred per hundredweight shall be paid to the Nebraska Dry Bean Commission which would be established under this act. Now here is an important part of this edible bean checkoff. Two-thirds of this fee would be paid for by the growers at the time of the sale or delivery of the beans with the first purchaser paying the remaining one-third of the fee. The commission would then use these fees to devise and promote educational marketing and research programs in the dry bean area. The idea of farmer participation in marketing and researching of the product is not a new one, of course. It has been around since early 1930's when the turkey farmers formed such a group. Since that time checkoffs have been added to corn, wheat, soybeans, potatoes, beef, swine and milk. I don't know of any others. Some of these programs were initiated by the growers and producers themselves and some by legislative acts. Funds