

to plow some old ground here but I want everybody to understand where agriculture stands in the...as far as tax burdens in the State of Nebraska. Of all the states in the Midwest, with the exception of Wisconsin, we are the highest when it comes to taxing agriculture real estate as it pertains to agriculture. We are the highest state in the Midwest when it comes to taxing personal property taxes as it pertains to agriculture. We are the highest state in the Midwest when it comes to gasoline taxes. We are the highest state in the Midwest when it comes to fertilizer taxes. If this passes, we shall become the highest state in the Midwest as it pertains to grain taxes. Matter of fact, we will become the only state in the nation that taxes grain to subsidize the ethanol industry. Now, I'm a farmer so I maybe have a personal stake in this, so maybe I get a little emotional. But I could support this if I knew there was funds up front and I'm willing to move it one round closer to Final Reading if there is more General Fund money involved. And I've had a good talk with Senator Wehrbein and if the Appropriations Committee can act responsibly, and I think we will, but I think we need to recognize there is an obligation by the people of the State of Nebraska to make sure these ethanol plants are funded because we told them when they came here that they would get 20 cents per gallon for every gallon of ethanol they produced. And I am willing to let agriculture bear part of that burden. I thought a half a cent was enough because if we go three-quarters of a cent, it gets us out of line with the states around us. But I tried that, first round. I would like to have somebody else try it, but I'm not going to do it this time. I would even go for a compromise of five-eighths. I think the farmer elevators that are out there are smart enough they can figure 62.5 percent. But, whatever, let's move it on, I guess, and see where we're at. I have a couple of small amendments that are pretty important to a few individuals. We'll see what happens to them. We'll see what my attitude is when the time comes. But when you think about issues like this, it's no wonder farmers and ranchers are running around with petitions trying to do something about property taxes. And I'm like Senator Cudaback, this is peanuts compared to property taxes. And I hope the Legislature, if this passes, will do something about the property tax problem, at least get started in this biennium, at least get started, do something. You know, there are some people out in the rotunda that says, well, this helps the price of your grain. Well, I'm 60 miles west of the nearest ethanol plant. The corn in our area goes south to the feedlots or goes west to California to foster farms to feed their chickens or it