

the bill that dealt with this issue came to the Ag Committee this year. It was LB 105. It was introduced by the Ag Committee and I've circulated a little piece of information for you to look at and this information, of course, deals just with crop and livestock losses. Now you should know that, Senator Beutler, that there are other losses that are incurred by cities in this state that use animal damage control, for instance, with starlings and with blackbirds, also with rats and mice infestations. There's a number of cities that do use this. I know that in our interim hearing we held in Chadron last year, Alliance, Gordon and Gering, all came in requesting these funds. They had needs for them in their cities so this isn't just strictly a large animal problem. I think you were probably referring to the coyote problem where you can see the coyotes provide only 1.6 million in losses. Look what the pocket gophers do. Look what sparrows and blackbirds do. Look what beavers do. I should tell you that without the use of people who are professionals in this business, you can have many problems. For instance, right out east of Lincoln here last year someone decided to get rid of their beaver dam that was on their creek. They blew it up themselves and in the process destroyed a water supply out there for a whole number of residents. Now you see it's important that we keep those things in mind. It takes people who are professionals at this to make this work. And you're probably right about the Sandhills area, but we don't...our biggest problem in the Sandhills is the coyote problem and that isn't even the biggest problem on here. Those problems that you people are seeing in other parts of the state are other problems like gophers and mice, prairie dogs, for instance. I think that we had a fairly lengthy hearing and we had a tremendous number of people who came and supported this legislation, and I think that we need to keep in mind the fact that there are many cities that need these predator control people as well as the rural part of our state. Yes, we're asking for \$100,000 a year. These funds are matched with federal dollars and the people that utilize them are very professional and they have been very successful with what they do. The counties came and pleaded with us to help with this process. As you know, the difficulty with counties is the property taxes they're having to levy and they're just impossible to get those funds available now. So this will be a matched fund and it's not just for rural Nebraska, it's also for urban Nebraska. And I urge you to turn down this amendment of Senator Beutler's. Thank you.