

year, but animal agriculture in Nebraska is under severe stress. Ranchers and farmers who are in hog production, they'll not be paying any income taxes this year or from last year, and that's going to have quite a tie-in to our state economy. The average cattle rancher in Nebraska, last year, lost 25,000 dollars for every 100 cows that he owns. That's the average. If you had 400 cows, you backed up \$200,000.

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute.

SENATOR DIERKS: I'm sorry, \$100,000. It's a fact. The people who are involved with credit for agricultural institutions, agricultural development, are telling me that last year, every producer of cattle who had 100 cows lost \$25,000. That's devastating to our industry, and we don't need this sort of thing to add to that devastation. Most of those cattle ranchers that I know have access to irrigated...ground-irrigated corn fields for winter grazing. They rent these corn fields to put their cows on, and many of these ranchers have some irrigated grass. If we started taking away the rights of these here ground water irrigators and this legislation does just that, we then start losing our credit ability at the bank. We lose our collateral. I don't think that that's what Senator Beutler had in mind, and I'm sure that isn't what the rest of the committee had in mind, but that's part of the fallout...

SENATOR CROSBY: Time.

SENATOR DIERKS: ..from 108.

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Dierks, your light is next.

SENATOR DIERKS: Senator Elmer, I don't...are you there? Okay. I might want to ask you another question here.

SENATOR ELMER: Okay.

SENATOR DIERKS: LB 108 is about giving NRDs additional authority to regulate ground water that's affecting surface flows. Why not just add this new authority to the current Ground Water Management Act?

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Elmer.