

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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March 29, 1999 LB 822

SENATOR BEUTLER: Is my time gone, Senator?

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Nearly. Ten seconds.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Two, one.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Out of time. Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Madam President and members of the body, I wasn't going to get into this issue, but I passed out a column that was in the Lincoln paper this morning and it triggered my thoughts on this particular issue. I support the bill and think we are on the right track on LB 822, and I see we're going to have some comments about the committee amendments. One of the things I wanted to call the attention is particularly Senator Beutler's amendment, because it does limit future profitability, perhaps, in those areas. And I don't know the answer. I don't know whether I'm for or against this amendment, frankly. I understand what both are saying. My only point is that survival in agriculture today is difficult. No one knows what it's going to take for survival tomorrow. The article that I passed out talks about efficiency and the reason...and the fact that agriculture's been told to get efficient, get efficient, get efficient. I don't know whether the writer's right or not, but he makes the point that perhaps there's only one other industry that's more efficient than agriculture now and that is the computer industry. That has to do with workload, profit, the whole...the whole thing. And this amendment actually limits a person's future survival in those areas that are affected by this bill. That's my point. And I don't know what the right answer is in the future. I don't even know whether a 50 percent expansion will let a 20,000-head yard survive down the road. Certainly most 5,000 head operations today definitely feel they're not going to survive in five more years. The pressure's going to be go to 10, to 20, to 30 thousand. Certainly there's one yard now that...one lot that owns a 495,000-head capacity in Texas. That's Cactus Feeders. Just bought three yards. That's what they think it takes to survive. And I'm reluctant in this body to tell people where they're going to have to go in the future or be limited by where they can go to survive. We may be seeing the same thing in farms some day. You...I mean I think