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LB 870

in the Agriculture Committee. You may recall one of the contentious parts of LB 870 in its original form was the fact that on an experimental basis with a study conducted by the University of Nebraska we would allow liquification of animals and that was an issue that was not liked by a lot of people in the state. We did remove that section from LB 870 so it would be illegal for the liquification of animals to take place. I am not an expert when it comes to composting. I do support the amendment. But, Senator Dierks, you have a much better medical, scientific mind than I do. Would you explain to the body how the process of composting works and why we chose to use the number of 300 pounds because that's an issue we did struggle with.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Senator Dierks, would you care to respond?

SENATOR DIERKS: Yes. The initial number we were dealing with in committee was 600 pounds, and I think that the committee had the feeling that that was a little bit too generous so we backed it off to 300 pounds which we think is a little bit more likely to succumb to the composting process. It's a process that allows for bacterial decomposition of the carcasses and you have to do a certain amount of spreading of I believe sawdust between different layers of animals. It's pretty well outlined by the Journal. And I think it has all the elements we need to get us through a difficult time. One of the reasons that the rendering plants are having difficulty with their product is they put out products called tankage, bone meal, blood meal, and I think tallow. But those products historically have been used in the manufacture of animal feed, whether it be for minerals, the bone meal to use for phosphorus or in the tankage, for instance, for protein or the blood meal for protein. But there's a bad feeling across Europe about the use of any animal by-products in animal feed. And the reason they have this feeling is that there's a disease called mad cow disease that does occur in Europe that has not occurred in the United States or in North America to the best of my knowledge. But it's caused by a small organism called a "preon" or prion, different than a virus, different than a bacteria, but extremely difficult to kill. The rendering process doesn't render it useless. It still survives the rendering process. It's the same thing as scrapie in sheep. For a number of years now, United States renderers have refused