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LB 1092

the Legislature. This is a very interesting bill for me to follow along with in committee. It, being in this type of business at one time, I am very sympathetic with the small slaughterhouses in rural Nebraska. Remember back in the 1960s, the state had implemented a state inspection of all locker plants in the state and that was terminated after several years, not for the...not for the reason that...that we couldn't sell meat out of those...out of those plants, but the inadequacy of the people who were doing the inspection. They were...they were hiring people off the street and giving inadequate training at that time, and it just wasn't working out very well. So the state did get out of the...out of the business and back to the federal inspection of small locker plants, which I think at the time if we would have been "carefuller" with our...with our education to the people who were...who were doing the inspecting, it would have been a lot different. Going back to the federal type of inspection left a lot of loose ends in the custom slaughtering business. When I was in that business, we would see an inspector maybe three times a year, something like that, and you knew about when they were coming so you'd do a little sprucing up and get by your inspection, but those were...what we call custom-exempt plants. And since those have dwindled away in the...over the years, because of the fact that Senator Wehrbein was talking about, the numbers of animals that are in the local areas are dropping. You don't see the farmer out there anymore with 15 to 20 head of beef and a hundred hogs. It's just...it's not in the cards for them to do that. But we do have a lot of larger cattle operations and hog operations and they occasionally will have a hog with a broken leg or a steer, a big steer with a an injury and then they are...then they're willing to use that local...local operation and that...that animal, if it was under...under inspection by the state, you would be able to market that animal a lot better than you can now. If you have a couple thousand head of cattle in a feedlot, you're going to have a lot of these things happen and you can only...you can only give the meat to your employees so long and you've got several lockers full of meat. But, anyway, Senator Wehrbein was talking about if it, you know, what if you don't have enough people get on it. If you'll see in the committee amendments, if the state meat inspection is being maintained at fewer than five establishments on or after August 1st, with Senator Robak's amendment, after the year 2004, the state meat