

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

April 11, 2000 LB 1092

Legislature, I am rising to support Senator Robak in her effort to override the Governor's veto on LB 1092. This piece of legislation came through the Committee on Agriculture and we have spent a considerable amount of time on it, all through the process, to make sure that we were putting something out that would be helpful and would be accepted. I'd like to just read you part of the findings in the bill. "The Legislature finds that: Increasing markets for small and medium-sized producers can enhance statewide agricultural economic development. Niche marketing through local retailers and restaurants can add value to the state agricultural economy;" the Legislature finds that "Public safety is of tantamount importance to assuring a safe food supply and a positive national opinion of Nebraska's meat producers; and" the Legislature finds that "A pilot program for state meat inspection would help the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Economic Development determine the economic impact of a state meat inspection program in Nebraska." The veto message, as Senator Robak indicated earlier, asked for us to conduct an interim study to explore the interest and feasibility of such a program. We've done that interim study a year ago, and that was why the bill was developed. There is...there are some reasons, I think, that we should take a look at this. There is, in addition to the fact that it's contemplated that the state would have a 50 percent federal match for the cost of the program, but this is something that would last until, I think, November 15, 2001. If, before that time, it looks like this isn't going to work, this pilot program we're developing, then it will stop. But I think that if you look at that map that Senator Robak handed out to you, you'll see the number of states around us that have state inspected meat programs, there are 26 of them. And it gives them a heads-up over the rest of us that don't have it, because with the passage of Senate Bill Number 1988, which is...the hearing was held on April 6th this year, that will allow these...the producers using these 26 state inspection programs to be moving their meat intra...or interstate, and we won't be able to do that. So, producers in other states would be able to bring their product into Nebraska, we wouldn't be able to take our products into their states. We think that we have as good a product in Nebraska as there is anyplace else in the nation. We think we should have the same ability to move this meat, to provide these little economic development things for our