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LB 754

like to thank Senator Burling for designating LB 754 as a priority bill. I don't believe we would have a chance to really deal with this subject had he not seen fit to do so, and I appreciate that very much. I would like to briefly give an overview of why this bill is introduced. For the last at least two or three years I have been concerned about what we see happening in the rural areas, rural economic development, and the lack of jobs, lack of opportunities, and a general perception that the young people that grow up there have very few opportunities to stay there, come back and work there. A lot of our towns are declining in population when you get outside of the I-80 corridor and outside of the urban areas. At the same time, it's very obvious that one of the greatest generators of revenue and economic activity historically in the rural areas has been the production of livestock. It generates a different kind of economic activity than strictly grain production. And why is that? It's because it takes the grain production--soybeans, corn, hay--and it turns it into a different product, one that is processed, one that is shipped out of state or to a different part of the state in boxes instead of by truck or by train car. In that process, you have people involved in selling the feed to the livestock producer. You have the people that care for the livestock on a day-to-day basis, which is a 24/7 job. It is not four or five months a year. It's not five days a week. Livestock tend to want to eat and drink and have veterinarian care, if they need it, seven days a week, so you naturally create some positions when you have that type of activity. A new dairy that's located in my district a couple three years ago that came from...actually, the people came from California, went to southwest Kansas and then, two brothers, one of them visited Nebraska and thought what an ideal spot for a dairy. You have all kinds of underground water. You have a good source of hay, soybeans, corn. So they built a dairy over by Shelby, 2,000 head of cows, 25 jobs. They feed \$4 million worth of feed per year. That's \$4 million. The...initially there was some concern about the location of the dairy, fear that this would somehow be damaging to the environment, but it's a very class operation. They're thinking of expanding and many of the people in the area are trying to figure out how to help them do that. On the other hand, we've had dairies that have wanted to locate in Nebraska who have been