

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

March 16, 2004 LB 916

from the livestock industry have something to say about this. I live there. My grandchildren are the sixth generation. I care about our water. I care about our streams that are clean. It seems like sometimes I think that we're kind of put in the category of somebody that's trying to get around all the regulations and trying to pollute our water. It's exactly the opposite of that. The livestock industry, just a couple figures here, totaled sales this last year or I guess 2001 of \$6.1 billion. That's 64 percent of all the agriculture cash receipts. Livestock production is the number one customer of Nebraska's feed grains--more than \$3.5 billion in sales each year. Twenty-five percent of Nebraska employment is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture and agribusiness. Twenty-seven percent of the value added in Nebraska depends on the, directly or indirectly, on agriculture or agribusiness complex. Everyone benefits from clean water and a healthy environment. A lot of livestock operations have been in operation for many years, doing our best not to pollute any waters. This is being demanded of us to do many things that we're already doing that's costing more money. The fees paid by...are paid by individuals and family-owned operations. They're not large cooperations or large corporations that are paying these fees. We do not have the luxury to pass it on, like Senator Wehrbein and Senator Schrock have already mentioned. That's one of the frustrating things about agriculture, is that we kind of take what we can get, and we keep getting...our costs of input keep raising all the time. Placing additional fees on livestock producers discourages growth. I'd like to even ask you, we've made a lot of effort in the last few years to try to keep large hog operations out. They're not corporate operations because we cannot have corporate operations. They've redefined their groups as individuals. We try our best to keep the large ones out, but guess who's quitting? I just took a little mental survey of ten miles around where I live and I could think of about 17 different farmers that use to raise livestock, cattle and hogs, that are no longer doing it anymore. They were small. They were probably 100 to 200, 300 head of cattle, which cannot operate anymore with today's costs and the cost of equipment, unless you want to do it with a scoop shovel and you go out there when it's ten below zero. It's not much fun and there's a