

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

May 10, 2005

LB 71, 90

course of the discussion we've had in the Ag Committee about the need to have some better oversight...and I would wholeheartedly agree with that, the idea that some of these projects that were funded probably should have had a better look at it. There probably should have been better coordination with existing research opportunities or research establishments in the state. And I think that's important. But the thing that we need to look at is, there have been successes under these proposals. Senator Beutler mentioned that he hopes that this does show some success in rural Nebraska for those that would seek to use it. Well, we can base the assumption, or we can base the answer to his question on the reality of today. We can look back, and then we can talk about the places in my part of the state that have benefited greatly from the provisions that were in Senator Wehrbein's original bill that Senator Stuhr now has before us as an attempt to reinstate it. We looked at the opportunities that were provided by those farmers in my area that got together and decided that it was not profitable for them to have ConAgra and other companies process their beans for them. And so they made an offer, and they used the opportunity that was granted to them under the proposal to fund some of the administrative research, as well as coordinating with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to ensure that they had the necessary information to be able to step out and say, this makes sense financially, this is beneficial to, not only us, but to all producers in our area, but it also returned the ownership back from multinational companies, back to the local individual producers, which then give them the opportunity to control more of the profits and be able to distribute that to their members. And if you're talking about how we can benefit rural Nebraska, it's not always about what programs are in place and what things we can do, but it's also, how do we empower people? And by passing the provision of this that deals with LB 71, we're going to continue that opportunity that we have seen in my part of the state. It's not just on the side of the bean producers. We had it on the side of the sugar beet producers. We also saw it in other areas, with alfalfa, and direct production of agriculture, where farmers got together, ironically, and cooperated, even though we're very independent, and said, look, if we work together and we figure out the right opportunity and the right structure, we can make this work for us, we can provide a beneficial and a