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February 16, 2006 LB 856

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Next agenda item, we go to General File, 2006 committee first priority bills. Mr. Clerk, LB 856.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 856, a bill by Senator Kremer. (Read title.) Bill was introduced on January 4, referred to the Agriculture Committee for public hearing. The bill was advanced to General File. There are committee amendments pending, Mr. President. (AM2107, Legislative Journal page 580.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We now go to Senator Kremer, open on LB 856. Senator Kremer.

SENATOR KREMER: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I will open on LB 856, and it's a fairly simple bill, and then also we have committee amendments that incorporate some other bills, and also becomes the bill. LB 856 amends the Nebraska Poultry Disease Control Act to apply regulatory interventions available under the law to the detection and eradication of avian flu, which I will probably call bird flu. It's a little easier to pronounce. Certain strains of avian flu can become highly infectious and result in heavy economic losses to the poultry industry. The concern is also associated with the fact that the strains of bird flu can sometimes transmit to humans and potentially evolve into forms that can be present with serious human health effects. I think you've all been reading in the last few weeks, almost each day, something in the paper about bird flu and how it is spreading. Just yesterday I think it mentioned four more countries that bird flu has been detected in, and maybe a couple children, I think, that died from the bird flu. So the Department of Agriculture brought this bill to us, that they needed to be able to monitor and do more surveillance of some of the poultry flocks. The provisions of LB 856 authorize the department to establish testing standards for monitoring for the presence of bird flu in breeding and commercial poultry flocks. In the present, it just talks...in the present statute it talks about the breeding flocks but not commercial flocks, so that's an addition. And it adds a definition to commercial poultry to include poultry raised for meat and eggs. It also authorizes the department to test for bird flu and other contagious and diseases in both breeding and