

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

March 2, 2006

LB 856

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Senator Fischer.

SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. Yes, Senator Schimek, when you're dealing with anyone's business--and in agriculture, not only is it a way of life, it's also a business--releasing that business information, as a producer myself, I feel that's a violation. That's not public information. And especially in the day and age we're living in now, where we might...where we might see some terrorist threats, not only has the department...the Nebraska Department of Agriculture warned against that, but also the USDA has spoken about terrorist threats, and one of the main targets could be the livestock industry in the United States. And in Nebraska, we all know that the livestock industry is the biggest economic force in this state. That's one thing we don't need to make that public. We don't need to make it readily available to people on where ranches are located. It's easy enough to find that out. It's easy enough to find out where feeding operations are. It shouldn't be made available under a premise identification bill, though, or premise identification law.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: But then...but then if I might ask, Senator Fischer, what would you think that the department might disclose at its discretion? I mean, as a member of the public, I'm certainly going to want to know that there may be a problem. I don't want to find out, you know, a couple weeks later than the department has knowledge of.

SENATOR FISCHER: I agree with Senator Louden, when he made his statement, that the public doesn't really need to be concerned with BSE or mad cow disease in a situation like this. What the department and what ranchers themselves and livestock producers would be concerned about are diseases like tuberculosis, diseases like brucellosis. If, say, we would happen, hopefully not, but if we would happen to have a hoof and mouth, anthrax, things like that that would happen, in that case the Department of Agriculture could release information on, if an event like that takes place, they could release the information on where that event has taken place.