

April 8, 1986

LB 1016

CLERK: Senator Miller, your amendment is on page 1842 of the Journal.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Jerry Miller.

SENATOR MILLER: Mr. President and members, this, very simply, would allow the grain sorghum producers to also be able to use 25 percent of their checkoff funds to influence federal legislation. This was brought to me by the President of the Grain Sorghum Producers Board and several other members and I asked them specifically if this was what the elected people wanted to do or if this is what the general consensus of the Grain Sorghum Producers wanted to do. I wanted to be assured of that in my own mind. And I asked them if they took a vote at their meeting. And he said, yes, we did. And I said what percentage of the people were meeting there? And he said a large percentage of the meeting, it wasn't a small percentage of the group. It was well represented, a vote that generally gave the consensus and not just a small majority but a vast majority of the individual grass roots members of this organization. And, very simply, they want to be able to use their checkoff funds to influence federal legislation just as the Corn and the Wheat Board. It is just simply that.

PRESIDENT: Senator Rod Johnson.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President and members, I guess it would be important to fill you in on what is happening on 1016 before I begin discussing the bill or Senator Miller's amendment too far along. First of all, LB 1016, by an amendment that I have pending, will substantially change the intent of the bill and I have agreed to allow several amendments, I think, that will be offered to this body to use 1016 as a vehicle for several ideas, including Senator Miller's. I have no problem with Senator Miller's amendment from the standpoint that by the passage of LB 60, I believe a year ago, or two, I can't recall, we passed for corn and wheat checkoff programs, the ability to influence legislation. We capped the amount of dollars that they could put into that program at 25 percent. I think that was fair and reasonable at that time. I don't hear of any sincere abuses to the ability of these checkoff groups to utilize those funds in that fashion and I anticipate you are going to see the same thing that we are now discussing in sorghum go to the other checkoff programs such as beef and others that do not have this ability to utilize their resources to also influence legislation. And so once we have opened the can of worms, as we