

PRESIDENT: Senator Rod Johnson. Senator Schmit is next.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President, I would prefer to ask Senator Haberman just a very simple question, if he would respond. Senator Haberman, I've not yet had an opportunity to carefully look through your amendment. But I'm curious to know, I know that you've sponsored other legislation dealing with complete refund of all ag programs dealing with the check-off. Is this dealing with just the 1.5 cents that we're talking about for ethanol? Is this for all the check-off programs that we have in existence today as well?

SENATOR HABERMAN: This says, "A grower who has sold corn, wheat, or grain sorghum, and has an assessment deducted from the sale price pursuant to this section may, by written application, secure a refund of the amount deducted." In my opinion this would be, as I understand it, only on 1230.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Only on 1230. Okay, all right. That is what I'm trying to figure out. I don't want to jeopardize the other check-off programs now in existence, although I would assume that if you wanted to jeopardize those that you would include the Beef Board and some others.

SENATOR HABERMAN: No, Beef Board is not in on it.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Yes.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Corn, wheat, or grain sorghum.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Okay, thank you very much for your response. I guess I'm going to say the same things a lot of you have been telling me through the last week or so about LB 1230 and what it does or does not do to the ag economy. This is one of those situations where we're in a damned if you do, damned if you don't. If you care about the ag economy certainly you are looking for alternatives to stimulate the economy, and certainly 1230 would do that if it is passed, and passed intact as has now been amended. On the other hand, I'm sure that most of you who represent rural areas have been in contact with an awful lot of farmers, as I have, who are complaining about expanding that check-off fee to include the money for the ethanol industry. That is a simple matter of fact. I think I've talked to just about all the representatives here that have some ag interest. And it is a tough issue for a lot of us. And I don't know what