

Agriculture themselves cut these individual programs as they see fit. But I don't think that we should treat one agency differently than the other and I would prefer, much prefer to see the Department of Agriculture just get a 3 percent cut and let them decide what programs should be cut.

SENATOR BARRETT: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: (No response.)

SENATOR BARRETT: Senator Rod Johnson, did you wish to close on this?

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President, members, I want to thank the many members who have stood up and spoke in favor of this particular program because I think it has been a program that has been utilized in this state, and when you stop and consider that there are 60,000 farmers in Nebraska, it is hard for me to imagine that we are going to see duplication of services. Now the two programs together have reached about 800 farm families up to this particular point, give or take a few numbers there, but the fact is there are still a lot of families who need this service who are trying to find a service, and I think the two, the tech schools and the University, are trying to get out and get these programs to the people but it is a difficult process. It is difficult to get a farmer to admit he may be in some financial problem. It is difficult for them to come to the realization that maybe there is a problem and that maybe I do need to talk to somebody about this. We have had problems in this state. Senator Higgins mentioned the fact that we have had farmers take their own lives because of the financial crisis. We have had a very unfortunate incident in Cairo involving a farmer and our law enforcement people, and I am assuming that we will have those problems continue if we simply turn our back on the farmers who do have financial stress at this time. This program, I would like to say, is not administered by the Department of Agriculture. It is simply a point in which the money is funneled through to the University and the technical community colleges for them to get that money out to providing services to our farmers. If this cut is not...if this cut is left in this package, the Department of Agriculture will suffer a 5.6 percent cut. We also saw the Department get a 10.4 percent cut in the last session. Now I recognize that the Department did come up with an