

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President, members, I rise for a couple of reasons. One, I guess I want to defend the fact that even though I am from an agricultural district I still believe that we do have to protect some of our educational systems and I feel very strongly that, as Senator Schmit has pointed out, there is an agricultural crisis out there, but the University of Nebraska did not cause that crisis. They are simply a victim of the crisis as are all the agencies that we now have that we are funding. And I don't think that we need to blame them or any other agency for the fact that there is an agricultural crisis out there. We have to do more. Our agencies have to do more to help work our way out of that crisis and we have to demand more from the University to help us do that. I have looked at some of the cuts that may come down from the University of Nebraska. Senator Schmit, I guess, is saying to us that quite frankly these may be a smoke screen and quite frankly they may be, but I'm afraid if we call their bluff and we do lose the school at Curtis, we do lose some Extension Service programs, then I question whether we've made the right decision. Out of the so-called \$2.4 million worth of cuts that will come from the University of Nebraska, UN-L programs, 1.7 right now will come out of agricultural programs. That concerns me a great deal. Maybe that's parochial. Maybe I'm protecting the interests that I'm supposed to be protecting but I am concerned about that. I'm concerned as well about the general well-being of our students and the academic support that we have to give those students and we have a lot of students up here, I'm sure, come from agricultural backgrounds, agricultural families who I am sure their families, like many others of my friends and neighbors throughout my district, who are going through some financial crisis. But I don't think that we should give up on those young people because as I said a couple of days ago, these are the same young people that we're looking to to help us not only work our way through this problem but will be sitting in these seats in the future, and I think that we shouldn't forget those people, and I think we're trying to make the best decision possible for the well-being of our state, the well-being of our students in our postsecondary education institutions, and that is part of the reason why I supported a reduction in that particular cut this morning, and that is probably why I will go ahead and support a reduction in the University's cut. But I want it to go on record saying to the Board of Regents and to