S.D. Livestock Ranchers Start Calving, Lambing

SIOUX FALLS (AP) - Recent snow is helping to provide some snow protection for crops in South Dakota, but the previously mild temperatures and minimal snow coverage has been helping livestock ranchers start calving and lambing.

The U.S. Agriculture Department says in its latest crop report that feed and water supplies are mostly adequate due to the open winter allowing livestock to be pastured most of the season. Cattle are rated at 93 percent in good to excellent condition.

South Dakota saw its first snow storm of the season during the last full week of February, and it left an average snow depth of 2.3 inches for the state. That is expected to go up with warnings and watches listed for across the state on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Neb. Woman Convicted In Husband's Death

FAIRBURY, Neb. (AP) - A Jefferson County jury has convicted a woman of first-degree murder in the beating death of her husband.

The Lincoln Journal Star says the jury returned its verdict against 55-year-old Susan DeJong on Monday, just hours after receiving the case.

DeJong was accused of beating 52-year-old Thomas DeJong at their home west of Fairbury in March 2011. Her trial began last week.

Prosecutor Corey O'Brien said Susan DeJong had a history of abusing her husband that culminated in murder. Defense attorney James Mowbray argued someone else must have attacked her husband.

Neb. Voter Photo ID Bill Sparks Filibuster Try

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Several Nebraska senators lined up in an attempt to draw out debate on a bill that would require Nebraska voters to show a government-issued photo ID before casting their ballots

A filibuster attempt to clog up legislation and basically talk the bill to death began Monday as lawmakers debated Legislative Bill

After two-and-a-half hours of debate, the lawmakers adjourned and will pick up the issue again later.

Supporters of the bill say that it is needed to detect and discourage voter fraud. Opponents say voter fraud is not a problem in Nebraska, and this is an attempt to make it difficult for seniors, youth and low-income people to vote.

More than 20 Nebraska groups have protested the bill in several rallies at the Capitol this session.

Kerrey Reconsidering Senate Bid?

BY MARGERY A. BECK

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. - Former U.S. Sen. Bob Kerrey is reconsidering his decision not to run for Nebraska's open U.S. Senate seat this year, a Democratic campaign consultant who has worked with Kerrey said Monday.

The news came weeks after Kerrey, a 1992 Democratic presidential candidate and former one-term Nebraska governor, initially rejected running after weeks of speculation. Paul Johnson, who served as campaign manager for Nelson and Kerrey, said Kerrey told him Monday morning that he was again considering running for the seat now held by outgoing Democratic Sen. Ben Nelson.

Kerrey's decision to reconsider his options could put the seat back into play for Democrats who had considered him the party's best hope of retaining the seat as Republicans work to net the four seats they need this November to take control of the Senate.

But Kerrey also has a history of considering campaigns that he never enters. He did so in 2000,



when he considered another run for president, as well as in 2005, when he toyed with running for New York City mayor. In 2008, he again stepped away from a run for Nebraska's last open U.S. Sen-ate seat, now held by Republican Mike Johanns.

Johnson said Kerrey has not yet made up his mind and reports that he had decided to run

"are not true." But he said Kerrey, 68, could announce a decision as soon as Wednesday. The deadline for Kerrey, who served as U.S. Senator from 1989-2000, to file for a Senate run this year is Thursday.

"On a stack of Bibles, he has not made that final determination as of right now," Johnson said. "Obviously, there's a short window."

Johnson said he couldn't comment on why Kerrey is reconsidering, except to say: "Obviously, he felt uncomfortable with his decision."

Kerrey did not immediately return email and phone messages left Monday by The Associated Press seeking comment.

His entrance into the race could be a gamechanger for Democrats, who had all but ceded the seat to Republicans after both Nelson and Kerrey had earlier bowed out.

"Bob Kerrey's entrance immediately makes this a race to watch," said Steve McMahon, a national Democratic strategist and media consultant and Nebraska native. "While Nebraska tilts Republican, Bob Kerrey has always defied that tilt."

But a Kerrey run could also stir some resentment within his own party and give Republicans ammunition to label Kerrey as indecisive.

Kerrey's indecision this time around would likely claim a casualty in his own camp, University of Nebraska Regent Chuck Hassebrook, who announced his bid for the Democratic nomination for Nelson's seat after Kerrey said earlier this month that he wouldn't run.

Hassebrook gave up the chance to run for reelection to the regent's seat he's held since 1994 so he could give Democrats a recognizable name at the top of the November ballot. He said he doesn't believe Kerrey will now decide to run.

S.D. House Panel Passes Bill On Juvenile Sexting

BY VERONICA ZARAGOVIA Associated Press

PIERRE - A South Dakota lawmaker more narrowly defined "juvenile sexting" on Monday, saying he doesn't think the illegal activity should fall under the child pornography law.

An amended version of Mitchell Republican Sen. Mike Vehle's bill passed the House Judiciary Committee on Monday.

In the measure, juvenile sexting includes intentionally creating, producing, possessing and distributing through any computer or digital media a photograph or digitized image of nude minors. The bill makes the act of juvenile sexting punishable by a Class 1 misdemeanor.

The amendment also clarifies that any minor who receives a sexually explicit picture of another minor and deletes it instead of sending it to someone else under 18 would not be charged.

"What we have on the books now for existing law is you either give them a slap on the wrists or you charge them with child

pornography and they need to register as a sex offender," Vehle said. "The problem here is that the punishment doesn't fit the crime.'

But, Vehle said, sexting isn't a light matter because of its longlasting effects. Once the images are on the Internet, Vehle said, "they spread like wildfire" and can land in the hands of sexual predators.

Jesse Weins, professor of criminal justice at Dakota Wesleyan University, said the bill helps the state deter sexting and step away from the "all or nothing approach" to punishment.

"In these cases it's minors exploiting themselves, but oftentimes they don't understand the gravity of it," Weins said, especially because social media adds more outlets for the pictures.

Last year, Vehle sponsored a similar measure but chose to kill it after questions arose on what to do when a juvenile sends the image to an adult. This year, Vehle focused the legislation on minors only.

The measure next goes to the full House for a vote.



Kerrey