

Heavy rains lash waterlogged Iowa

BOB NANDELL/The Register



Mark King of Jefferson, right, tosses a sandbag onto a truck Tuesday in Ames as he and dozens of other volunteers fought flooding along South Duff Avenue.

Residents fight back with sandbags, pails

Howling winds hit Iowa: 2A

By FRANK SANTIAGO

Register Staff Writer

With heavy rains again lashing the state Tuesday, waterlogged Iowans doggedly slung sandbags and buckets to prevent even more flood damage.

The National Weather Service said thunderstorms that danced through all but the northeast corner of the state had dropped one-half to 1½ inches of new rain, adding more misery to suffering communities.

Although most swollen streams and rivers were holding steady or had receded, nervous state and city officials assembled contingency plans late Tuesday as forecasts warned that heavy downpours could again charge into the state.

Blinding rainstorms in the past week have dumped at least 6½ inches of rain in a wide east-west band across the state's midsection, killing at least four people and damaging tens of millions of dollars worth of crops, livestock and property.

In Louisa County, breaks in separate levees flooded farmland near Wapello and the fairgrounds in Columbus Junction. By 4 a.m. Tuesday, the flooding Iowa River broke through a levee that protected farmland near Wapello, sending about 40 volunteer sandbaggers dashing to safety.

"People took off and did need to run to their trucks" to get out of the area as the water poured through, said Mary Gieselman, disaster services director for the county. No one was injured.

An estimated 23,000 acres of farmland were under water where the Iowa and Cedar rivers merge, said Janice Hoehle, an Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service official in Louisa County.

Of potential trouble spots around the state, officials were watching Louisa County; Clarke County, particularly near Osceola in south-central Iowa; and the Hamburg area in the southwestern tip of the state, where the east and west tributaries of the Nishnabotna River meet.

In the basement of the Hoover State Office Building, a command center set up to coordinate rescue and aid efforts rang with busy phones. Upon one map of Iowa, 25 counties were outlined to indicate flood damage; another nine counties were highlighted as areas at risk, depending on what the storms did late Tuesday.

"The problem is we've had several crests ... so they've had to deal with flood fights not just once, but two, three and four times," Jerry Ostendorf, operations officer for the state Disaster Services office, said about

Floods damage acres of crops

By DON MUHM

Register Farm Editor

Thousands of Iowa crop acres are under water or have sustained severe crop damage because of the recent heavy rains, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service officials reported Tuesday.

One of the hardest-hit counties is Dallas in central Iowa, with an estimated 175,000 acres affected by severe soil erosion, flooding and standing water, said ASCS county executive director Beth Grabau.

In southeast Iowa where the Iowa and Cedar rivers merge, Louisa County ASCS official Janice Hoehle reported an estimated 23,000 ac-

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FLOODING

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underwater, thanks in part to a broken levee near Wapello.

Although precise figures were not available, county disaster committees Tuesday were trying to assess damage. Reports were made by U.S. Department of Agriculture officials representing local agencies, including the Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service technicians, ASCS workers and others.

Here are county reports by the ASCS:

Clinton County — Two thousand acres of cropland were still underwater Tuesday, said Kenneth Kruger, county ASCS executive director. That is less than half the acreage flooded by heavy rains over the weekend, he said. Fields in the Low Moor area were drenched by 7 inches of rainfall Friday, after 5 to 6 inches Wednesday. However, he said, "things don't look as bad as you might expect. Soybeans look tough, though, with a lot of mud on them."

Dallas County — Roughly half of the county, or about 175,000 acres, has suffered storm-related damage, said Grabau. Disaster officials toured the county Monday and saw a lot of "erosion problems," she said. Damage was severe in the eastern half of the county. Highway 169 was closed north of Adel.

Fremont County — Extensive flooding was reported, with 5,000 acres affected. ASCS officials estimated 2,800 acres of soybeans and 2,200 acres of corn have been hurt. Numerous terraces have washed out.

Greene County — No official damage estimate was prepared yet, but Kevin Fitzpatrick of the ASCS reported "farmers reporting ponds the fullest they've ever been." He added, "We've had 8½ inches of rain last week alone."

Jasper County — The entire county has suffered damage, ASCS officials said. They estimated 18,250 acres of crops were affected — 10,000 acres of corn, 7,300 acres of soybeans and 950 acres of oats. Crop damage was put at 85 percent. Significant soil erosion was reported.

Johnson County — About 12,000 acres of crops are affected, ASCS Executive Director Steven Carson reported. This includes 6,000 acres of corn with an estimated 50 percent yield loss possible and 4,000 acres of soybeans with a 60 percent yield loss projected. The balance of the cropland affected is hay and pasture.

Linn County — Substantial damage

to soil conservation terraces and waterways was noted in the county ASCS assessment report. It showed 10,000 acres of crops affected. The yield loss on 5,000 acres of corn was seen as 30 percent. Soybean yields were cut by the same percentage on 3,000 acres. Other damage occurred on 1,000 acres each of oats and hay.

Louisa County — The county has never seen this kind of flooding before, said county executive director Janice Hoehle of Wapello, who has worked 36 years in the Louisa County ASCS office. She estimated 23,000 acres were underwater out of 180,000 acres of crops in the county. The flood waters of the Iowa and Cedar rivers are worse than the flood of 1973-74, she said. "It's hard to tell exactly, but I don't think it's ever been higher," she added.

Mills County — ASCS officials said 2,600 acres of crops were flooded. This includes 1,300 acres of corn with a projected yield loss of 80 percent and 1,300 acres of soybeans with 90 percent yield loss.

Monona County — Flooding in Monona County is the worst since June 1984, ASCS officials reported. This year's high waters came after the crop had been planted and the expense of planting already made. In 1984 farmers were still planting crops on the Fourth of July, officials said.

Eastern Pottawattamie County — Total crop losses are possible on 2,100 acres underwater, county ASCS officials said. Most of the crop loss came in flooded cornfields.

Story County — About 23,000 acres of crops were damaged, said Sandra Leeper, acting county ASCS director. She reported 11,625 acres of corn and 9,345 acres of soybeans hurt by the storms. The projected yield loss is 75 percent.

Wapello County — ASCS executive director Gene Long figures 3,000 acres had severe degrees of yield losses running up to 100 percent. About 32,000 to 33,000 acres were underwater at one time, he said, including the Des Moines River Valley, which was flooded briefly in most cases. Rainfall ranged from 3 inches to 7½ inches. "There's a lot of pond-

ing in northern Wapello County," Long added.

Warren County — About 25,000 acres of crops were damaged. ASCS officials estimated 15,000 acres of corn and 10,000 acres of soybeans had yield losses of 20 percent because of flooding by rivers and streams. Officials estimated that 35,000 acres suffered damage, and that it would cost \$250,000 to repair terraces and rebuild grassed waterways damaged by the combination of heavy rains and high water.

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