

Ray Youngblood

Iowa Legislature okays private levee repair funds

By Dale Johnson

Iowa landowners with river levees damaged by the Flood of '93 and ineligible for federal repair assistance can now receive help from the state of Iowa.

The Iowa Legislature this year approved \$550,000 to cost-share up to 40 percent of the cost to repair the flood-damaged levees. The maximum amount that can be received is \$2,500.

"The money will be available immediately upon signing of the bill (SF 2330) by Gov. Branstad," says Jim Gulliford, director of the soil conservation division of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

Landowners, however, must

not have received any federal funds to repair damaged levees. Sign-up will take place at local soil and water conservation district offices. The funds will be available through June 30, 1996.

"This will help a lot of landowners," Gulliford says. "We are aware of 80 landowners in 17 counties that filed

damage survey reports with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS)."

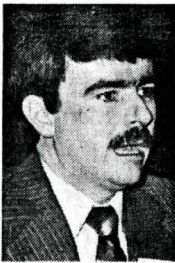
The SCS had federal funds to repair only those levees protecting a public entity. Gulliford says more Iowans with private levees probably did not file damage reports because they knew they were ineligible for SCS assistance. Now, they may obtain state aid.

William Ridings with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) says there are 237 levees in Iowa damaged by last year's flood. He estimates that 100-125 are privately-owned.

Ridings estimates that 75 percent of the repairs on the federal levees will be completed by the end of 1994. He said that \$30 million has been spent, and that the cost will likely rise.

"Money is still available to repair levees that protect public entities," he says.

Issue Update



Gulliford



FB requests animal damage funds

The Iowa Farm Bureau last week asked Iowa's members of Congress to support continued funding for a federal animal damage control program.

Merlin Plagge, IFBF president, asked Sen. Tom Harkin and Reps. Neal Smith and Jim

Plagge said the agriculture department's proposed budget for fiscal 1995 reduces funding by \$2.6 million, which could eliminate the animal damage control office and a biologist position created in Iowa less than two years ago.

veys of sheep and cattle producers also have shown significant losses.

"The USDA program provides technical assistance to producers who face losses from animal damage," Plagge said. Under the program, federal