

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Editorials

Soil conservation importance does not end

Special attention has been directed this week at the enormous importance of soil and water conservation in Iowa through the observance of Soil Conservation Week, Sept. 7-13.

Here in Benton County, the many wonderful examples of soil conservation are evident and a real tribute to both the Soil Conservation officials and directors, and even more so, to the farmers themselves.

Orderly development and wise use of land and water resources has never been more urgently needed than now when world-wide shortages of some food commodities are pressing for ever-more production.

Iowans generally understand the extreme importance of soil conservation practices. Yet during the past two years, Extension agronomists at Iowa State

University say Iowa has experienced the greatest soil erosion in 25 years, due to bad weather and unfavorable soil conditions.

One result of this has been to make everyone more aware of damages resulting from improper land use practices. We have had many examples in this county and of land erosion, especially on fields too steep for continuous row crops. At the same time we have had dramatic evidence of how contour farming and terraces held back and even impounded run off on hillsides where severe erosion would otherwise have resulted.

If Iowa is to maintain national leadership in agriculture and continue to be the bread basket of the world, our most priceless asset, our soil, must be protected in every way possible. That's what soil

conservation is all about.

We take this opportunity to congratulate the county's conserving farmers, our Soil Conservation Commissioners and the entire staff of the Soil Conservation Offices in soil conservation programs.

But there is much to be done yet. Just because the week is over doesn't mean the need for continued emphasis on soil erosion is over. The need is present every day of the year. Soil conservation needs to be a part of every Bentonians life.

But many of the needed conservation practices take money . . . money that all too often is not available. The state of Iowa has been intelligent and far-sighted in providing what assistance it could.

But it is to the Ford administration's disgrace that the soil conservation assistance funds were eliminated at a time

the government was advocating even more crop production. The few dollars, comparatively, spent initiating soil conservation practices are probably the best investment the taxpayers of this country can make.

They help insure a future supply of food at a respectable prices; they give us the strength necessary to maintain foreign grain sales important to the U.S.'s trade balance; they encourage conservation practices that otherwise might not be followed; and most importantly, they pay decades and decades of high-level dividends.

More ag production will be needed in the future, and with it more careful use of our soil. Bentonians must not forget this need, and they should make every attempt to remind Des Moines and Washington decision makers of this need.