

SOIL CONSERVATION PROGRESS IN IOWA---FAST ENOUGH?
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Being relatively a newcomer on the soil conservation scene in Iowa (April 1984), my concepts of the state come from my corn-belt background of my native state of Indiana, and my associations from four years of soil conservation work more recently in North Dakota.

Two facts are apparent after only a quick look at soil conservation efforts in this state: 1) the soil conservation teamwork of farmers, agencies, and groups has led to a great deal of progress in protecting the land against soil erosion, and Iowa's reputation as a soil conservation leader is well-deserved and 2) despite the progress being made, the job in Iowa is so gigantic that every effort needs to be made to continue to quicken the pace of application of soil conservation practices to the land.

Consider the fact that Iowa is ranked second in the nation in the number of acres of conservation tillage, and that more than 7 million acres of cropland are protected against soil erosion. But to offset that progress, consider that the most recent SCS national resources inventory shows that more than twice that amount, nearly 19 million acres, are eroding at amounts above "tolerable" levels. The study shows about 11 million acres are eroding at levels more than twice the tolerable amount of 5 tons per acre.

The average erosion level of 9.4 tons per acre per year on cropland is a strong signal that even more effort needs to be put into soil conservation in this state.

On the bright side, the state of Iowa continues to increase financial assistance, with more than \$8 million a year being offered in cost-share funding annually.

On the federal level, Iowans are benefitting significantly from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's plan to target funds to areas of the country with the most severe erosion problems. Three areas in Iowa have been designated as target areas, and thousands of dollars in technical help and financial cost-sharing have been allocated to those areas.

During 1985, the Soil Conservation Service and many other groups are celebrating 50 years of soil conservation in this country. The situation in Iowa is one in which we can all celebrate the progress that has been made, but also one that we can look at as a time to rededicate ourselves to the task that lies ahead.