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One Approach To Soil Conservation — — —

Storm Lake Pilot-Tribune

State Representative Dale Cochran of Webster county has introduced a bill in the legislature that will stir up considerable debate among landowners.

It is a bill to set up a comprehensive state-wide water resource plan in which mandatory soil conservation practices could be required. Soil conservation programs have always been of a voluntary nature, so the idea of making a farmer use soil-saving practices could run into a hornet's nest of controversial debate.

But one must view the future with such regulations in mind. The changes in farming to more row crops and building of huge artificial lakes on Iowa rivers makes some type of mandatory watershed control a necessity.

First take the change in the farm picture. Our local soil conservationist tells us that terraces built back in the 1950's no longer fit the farming methods of today. They were built for smaller equipment. Now six and eight row units often are operated over the terraces instead of with them. A new type bench terrace is replacing the smaller ones but only three have been built in Buena Vista County.

Less grass and pasture acreage is included in rotations. Now it's often continuous corn with beans as an alternate. Row crops step up soil erosion.

So this change in farming coupled with huge reservoir dams like Rathburn and Saylorsville on the Des Moines river watershed, bring an ever-increasing need for keeping the soil where it is. We have too many examples in the state of artificial and natural lakes made shallow or useless for recreation because of siltation.

Those who care about the land; those who appreciate the sum of \$50 million that went into the Rathburn development; those who care about Storm lake and pushed the dredging program, are people to whom Cochran is looking for support.