



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND STEWARDSHIP

Bill Northey, Secretary of Agriculture

Immediately following the storm events of 2008, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey requested the Soil Conservation Division of the Iowa Department of Agriculture to survey counties and submit a flood damage assessment. These were the preliminary results that were presented to the Rebuild Iowa Task Force:

It was estimated that \$40 million of damage was done to conservation practices.

Percent of practices that operated properly:

Grass waterways 55%

Terraces 83%

Grade stabilization structures and water control basins: 90%

Key observations of Iowa Department of Agriculture employees and conservationists:

- Crop residues reduced soil erosion and slowed runoff.
- Long term no till showed fewer signs of erosion and runoff than any system using tillage
- Field with combinations of two or more conservation practices performed better than fields with a single practice
- Practices installed and maintained to USDA/NRCS standards and specifications generally functioned and operated as designed and withstood the storms
- Maintenance of conservation practices, particularly waterways, was important to their success.

Lessons learned and direction for the future:

- Like a “carbon footprint” consider a “hydrologic footprint” of all actions.
- Propose new initiatives for water storage and infiltration
- Accelerate adoption of no-till/residue management for erosion, soil quality, and infiltration.
- Expand “conservation systems approach”
- Increase focus on maintenance of practices.
- Renewed focus on planning at the farm/watershed level.

Federal Response:

\$1 Million to NRCS for EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) - purpose to repair practices that were federally funded

\$32 Million to FSA in ECP (Emergency Conservation Program) – 65 counties have been approved for ECP money some of the purpose is for debris removal, fence repair etc

Below is summary of LSB 1125. The bill provides for one time funding and on going expenditures for flood repairs, recovery and prevention:

Division 1: Flood Impact Prevention (\$2.59 million)

- Research Farm to understand the flow of water on certain practices. *Cost \$790,000*
- Cost Share moneys in targeted watersheds to build up and increase capacity in water retention basins and terraces. *Cost \$1.5 million*
- Use Light Detection and Ranging technology (LiDAR) for watershed and water management planning. *Cost \$300,000*

Division 2: Technical Assistance for Urban Practices (\$450,000)

- Hire 6 urban conservationists that will assist urban communities and landowners with planning and technical assistance. *Cost \$450,000*

Division 3: Maintenance and Restoration Fund (\$11.2 million)

- One-time fund for repair of conservation practices that do not qualify for federal disaster assistance. *Cost \$6 million.*
- Flood Prevention Low interest loans to assist landowners in maintaining practices that were not affected by the 2008 flood. *Cost \$1.5 million.*
- Technical support for landowners that need to repair practices caused by flooding. *Cost \$3 million*
- Invest in 20 Soil Conservation technicians and provide on going and continuous training *Cost \$700,000*

Total: \$14,240,000