



## Washington Report January 8, 2010

### CIRB News...

**Reminder: 2010 Annual Meeting Fast Approaching.** There are only five weeks remaining until the CIRB “Meeting of the Year,” and the full agenda and registration materials can be found [here](#). **Sponsorship opportunities still remain; for more information, please contact Jessica Hixson at [jhixson@cropinsurance.org](mailto:jhixson@cropinsurance.org).** Participants can look forward an exciting program, featuring:

- Dennis Todey, Extension State Climatologist, South Dakota State University: Keynote Speaker
- Washington Panel – Mike Torrey, CIRB Federal Affairs Representative; Mary Kay Thatcher, Director of Public Policy, American Farm Bureau Federation
- Reinsurance Panel – John Reinman (moderator), Managing Director, Guy Carpenter & Company LLC; Jim Aldeman, Chairman, CIRB Executive Committee and Vice President and General Manager, American Agricultural Insurance Company; Michael Dicker, Senior Vice President – Agriculture, Max Re Ltd.; Bill Totsch, President, Totsch Enterprises; Mike Zielin, Senior Vice President, Partner Re Insurance Corporation of America
- Kurt Henke, CIRB Legal Counsel, Henke-Bufkin, P.A.: Legal Challenges Facing the Crop Insurance Industry
- Jim Wiesemeyer, Senior Vice President, Informa Economics
- Joe Glauber, Chief Economist, USDA and Chairman, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Board of Directors
- Bill Murphy, Administrator, Risk Management Agency: Report on the Standard Reinsurance Agreement

### SRA News...

**RMA Responds to Comments on Milliman Study.** This week, the Risk Management Agency published its response to comments from interested parties on its Milliman Study. In its response, RMA states that the Milliman Study is unbiased, transparent, and methodologically rigorous. Additionally, the agency notes that the report can provide key information to all stakeholders as part of the SRA process. To view the response, click [here](#).

**Minnesota Farmer Troubled by SRA Impact on Rural Jobs.** DeVonna Zeug, President of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, penned a letter at [FarmPolicyFacts.org](http://FarmPolicyFacts.org) detailing the

devastating impact that the proposed reductions in the draft SRA would have on rural jobs and economic prosperity; she pointed out that thousands of jobs are tied to the delivery of crop insurance. Additionally, Zeug noted that the proposed cuts to crop insurance would not even be reallocated elsewhere within the rural economy, making the draft SRA “a raid on the agriculture budget baseline.” The full letter is attached to this report.

## **Congressional News...**

**Peterson Plans Spring Hearings on Farm Bill.** As expected, House Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson plans to begin hearings on the 2012 Farm Bill this spring, according to a Committee spokeswoman. While Peterson has not shared any details regarding specific topics or locations for the hearings, he has indicated to agriculture lobbyists that he does not want to involve other Committees, such as the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance panels, in the upcoming process.

**Congress to Focus on Healthcare and Jobs.** When the House and Senate return to town from their holiday break, their first order of business will be to reconcile the differences between their respective **healthcare reform measures**; House and Senate Democratic leaders have been negotiating behind the scenes in recent weeks. In addition to healthcare, Members desperately want to pass **job creation legislation** in an attempt to boost their political prospects ahead of the fall midterm elections. The House passed a “jobs” bill last month, and the Senate is poised to bring a measure to the floor in the coming weeks.

**Dorgan and Dodd to Retire from Senate.** Senate Banking Chairman Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) both announced this week that they plan to retire at the end of 2010. In Connecticut, Democrats are optimistic about their chances of holding onto Dodd’s seat, as the State’s popular Attorney General, Richard Blumenthal, is planning to run. On the other hand, Republicans are hoping to pick up Dorgan’s seat in North Dakota, with Governor John Hoeven preparing to enter the race. Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND), a Member of the House Agriculture Committee, plans to run for re-election to his House seat in lieu of seeking the Senate vacancy. For more information, click [here](#).

## **USDA News...**

**RMA Chooses Cusick to Lead Education Division.** RMA recently announced the appointment of Lana K. Cusick as the Director of the Risk Management Education Division (RMED). Cusick most recently served as an Agriculture Development Officer in the Risk Management Services Division, and as an Insurance Management Specialist in the Reinsurance Services Division.

**USDA Implements Disaster Assistance Program.** USDA has implemented the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program that was created in the 2008 Farm Bill. As of this week, producers can visit their Farm Service Agency county offices to enroll in the program if they incurred crop production losses during the 2008 crop year. SURE provides disaster assistance to eligible producers that have suffered from production or crop quality losses. For more information, click [here](#).

**Livestock Disaster Payments Exceed \$175 Million.** USDA announced this week that it has issued more than \$175 million in payments to livestock producers through the Livestock Indemnity Program and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program. The two programs, which were authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill, serve to help producers recover from losses resulting from 2008 and subsequent disasters. For more information, click [here](#).

## **Member News...**

**FMH Hires Davis as Project Manager.** This week, Farmers Mutual Hail Insurance Company announced the hiring of Josh Davis as a Project Manager in the Project Management Office. Davis previously worked as a consultant for FMH.

**COUNTRY to Return \$1.4 Million in Crop Hail Dividends.** COUNTRY Financial recently announced that it plans to return roughly \$1.4 million in March to over 13,190 crop hail policyholders in Illinois. Each policyholder will receive approximately a 10.7 percent return of their 2009 premium. For more information, click [here](#).