



## Washington Report January 15, 2010

### CIRB News...

**Reminder: 2010 Annual Meeting Fast Approaching.** Cold? Then you're in luck! The CIRB "Meeting of the Year" in warm and sunny San Diego is only four weeks away. We have a great agenda in store, featuring everything from a deep dive on crop insurance, an incisive look at our agricultural economy, and a focused discussion of climate and weather patterns. 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).** Our program will feature:

- [Jim Wiesemeyer](#), Senior Vice President, Informa Economics: Keynote Speaker
- [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
- [Dennis Today](#), President-Elect, American Association of State Climatologists
- [Kurt Henke](#), CIRB Legal Counsel, Henke-Bufkin, P.A.: Legal Challenges Facing the Crop Insurance Industry
- 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

### SRA News...

**RMA Extends Comment Deadline on Draft SRA.** This week, the Risk Management Agency extended the deadline for Approved Insurance Providers to submit comments on the draft Standard Reinsurance Agreement until Tuesday, January 19.

**CIRB Continues to Engage on SRA.** CIRB would like to thank all members who have worked to add Senate signatures on the Agriculture Committee letter to RMA; we are continuing the push in

the Senate and are now beginning the process with a similar letter in the House. CIRB continues to meet with Members of Congress to clarify the impact the proposed SRA will have on our member companies and America's farmers and ranchers. Additionally, we will be submitting written comments to RMA prior to the January 19 deadline.

**Grassley Concerned About Proposed SRA Cuts.** Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), a member of the Agriculture Committee, recently told reporters that he fears the proposed cuts to crop insurance included in the draft SRA could adversely impact the ability of farmers to manage risk. Grassley Citing the cuts to crop insurance that were enacted in the 2008 Farm Bill, Grassley noted that the relationships between farmers and agents may eventually suffer. For more information, click [here](#).

## Congressional News...

**Lincoln May Hold Farm Bill Hearings in 2010.** According to DTN, Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Blanche Lincoln will possibly hold a few preparatory hearings on the Farm Bill this year, but she is currently more focused on a range of other issues, including child nutrition legislation, financial regulatory reform, and disaster aid for farmers. For more information, click [here](#).

**Stenholm Expects Congress to Cut Farm Programs.** Former House Agriculture Ranking Member Charlie Stenholm (D-TX) stated at an American Farm Bureau Federation meeting that he believes Congress will turn to farm supports for budget cuts. He specifically noted that biofuel and grain subsidies could receive scrutiny, and that crop insurance might need to undergo changes in order to stretch funding. Stenholm praised House Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) for planning Farm Bill hearings this year, noting that Peterson is taking a "foresighted" view of the coming years. For more information, click [here](#).

**Health and Economy Top January Agenda.** The House convened for two days this week, and both chambers will be back in town next week. House and Senate leaders aim to send **compromise healthcare legislation** to the Congressional Budget Office for a cost assessment before the end of this week. Additionally, the Senate will begin next week by taking up legislation to increase the **federal debt limit**. Finally, Senators are crafting **job creation legislation** to build on efforts begun in the House last month.

**Farm Bureau Recognizes Lincoln Disaster Aid Bill.** This week, the American Farm Bureau Federation passed a resolution favoring a disaster program that Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Blanche Lincoln has proposed in S. 2810, which requires USDA to provide emergency assistance to certain agricultural producers that suffered losses in 2009. In approving the resolution, Farm Bureau delegates noted that Southern farmers have suffered from multiple weather-related disasters and that the SURE (Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments) program will not be implemented quickly enough to help farmers.

## USDA News...

**RMA Announces 2009 Crop Year Pilot Avocado Crop Provisions.** The 2009 crop year season average price for avocados in California is \$1.16 per pound, in accordance with the California Avocado Commission's crop value and production assessments. For more information, click [here](#).