



## Washington Report February 4, 2010

### CIRB News...

**Annual Meeting: See You Next Week!** The CIRB 2010 “Meeting of the Year” begins in **five days!** We can’t wait for this year’s program, which can be found [here](#) along with our registration materials. Be sure to take care of any last-minute arrangements and let us know if we can help. You can reach Mike Torrey at (202) 841-1041, Paul Bleiberg at (202) 997-7545, and Jessica Hixson at (703) 338-6084.

### SRA News...

**RMA Briefs Producer Groups on SRA.** This week, the Risk Management Agency met with several producer groups to discuss the Standard Reinsurance Agreement renegotiation. At the meeting, RMA asserted that the initial draft of the SRA would neither force any company out of the crop insurance program nor cause any company to leave an area currently being served. The agency further stated that the optimal number of AIPs is not known, as there is typically greater efficiency in delivery by large companies. Finally, in an attempt to debunk claims that the first draft would cut rural jobs, RMA suggested that the A&O provisions would provide stability for agents and not result in job losses. For more information, contact Mike Torrey at (202) 544-0067.

**NCIS Discusses SRA with FarmPolicy.com.** Last week, National Crop Insurance Services President Bob Parkerson and former USDA Chief Economist Keith Collins spoke with FarmPolicy.com regarding the current SRA negotiation process. In their discussion, Parkerson and Collins covered the broad range of related issues, including background on crop insurance and the SRA, the 2008 Farm Bill, and the Administration’s Fiscal Year 2010 and 2011 budget proposals. For more information, click [here](#).

### Congressional News...

**President’s Budget Assumes Cuts to Crop Insurance.** Given ongoing budgetary pressures in Washington, agriculture continues to be a target for spending cuts. Earlier this week, the Obama Administration released its proposed budget for the 2011 Fiscal Year. The budget totals a record \$1.6 trillion, or 8.3 percent of gross domestic product, and assumes a deficit of \$1.3 trillion. Roughly \$1.4 trillion of the budget comprises discretionary spending, and the rest is mandatory spending. The proposal assumes savings from crop insurance totaling \$8 billion over 10 years as a result of the current SRA process, although it does not indicate how it plans to apply those savings.

CIRB will closely monitor the budget process as it moves forward. For more information, click [here](#).

**Congress to Move Full Speed Ahead on Jobs Legislation.** With Senator-elect Scott Brown (R-MA) expected to be sworn in today, Congressional Democrats have made **job creation** their primary legislative focus with the hope of benefiting at the polls in November. Senate Democrats have unveiled a range of proposals, including small business tax breaks for hiring and subsidies for additional infrastructure investment, and are expected to take a piecemeal strategy to moving their “jobs” agenda through the chamber. The House already passed its own bill before adjourning in December, but would still have to vote on any Senate-passed legislation in order for it to reach President Obama’s desk.

**Lincoln and Chambliss Voice Concerns with Obama Budget.** Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) each issued statements this week indicating their opposition to the cuts to agriculture programs included in President Obama’s FY 2011 budget. Lincoln noted that farmers rely on the 2008 Farm Bill to make business decisions, so a change in the rules outside of that process would undermine their success. To view the statements, click [here](#).

## **USDA News...**

**RMA: Sales Closing Dates Approaching.** This week, RMA reminded producers of the February 28 and March 15 sales closing dates for crop insurance. For more information, click [here](#).

**Coverage for Specialty Types of Barley and Soybeans Beginning with the 2010 Crop Year.** For more information, click [here](#).