



**Washington Report  
December 18, 2009**

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!**

**CIRB News...**

**Reminder: Register for 2010 Annual Meeting.** All registration materials for CIRB's 2010 "Meeting of the Year" are available on our website [here](#); the information has also been sent to all members by mail. The meeting will be held from February 10 – February 12, 2010 at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront in San Diego, California. **Sponsorship opportunities still remain; for more information, please contact Jessica Hixson at [jhixson@cropinsurance.org](mailto:jhixson@cropinsurance.org).**

**CIRB Office to Close December 24.** CIRB's office in Washington, DC will be closed for the holidays beginning on Thursday, December 24 and will reopen on Monday, January 4. However, should you need any assistance, all staff will be available via email and mobile phone during the break.

**SRA News...**

**Crop Insurance Industry Meets with Producers.** This week, representatives from the crop insurance industry met with commodity producer groups to discuss the Administration's first draft of the Standard Reinsurance Agreement (SRA). Mike Torrey and Paul Bleiberg attended on behalf of CIRB. Participants discussed the industry's general concerns with the proposed SRA and the possible implications for agricultural producers. The industry will continue to engage with producer groups and other stakeholders as the process moves forward. For more information, please contact Mike Torrey or Paul Bleiberg at (202) 544-0067.

**AACI Responds to RMA on SRA.** The American Association of Crop Insurers (AACI) responded to an opinion piece by Risk Management Agency Administrator Bill Murphy in last week's Omaha World Herald newspaper. AACI responded directly to several of Murphy's statements in the article, and also provided additional background information. For more information, click [here](#).

**House Members Ask USDA to Reduce Waste During SRA.** This week, House Energy and Commerce Chairman Henry Waxman joined several other members in sending a letter to Agriculture Secretary Vilsack urging him to cut "waste, fraud, and abuse" in the federal crop insurance program as part of the SRA negotiation process. The letter references hearings held in the

Oversight and Government Reform Committee in 2007 and also several studies that have found “high levels of wasteful spending” in the program. The Members ask Vilsack to implement the recommendations from the GAO report earlier this year in order to reduce program costs. To view the letter, click [here](#).

## Congressional News...

**House Agriculture to Begin Farm Bill Hearings Next Year.** According to Agri-Pulse newsletter, House Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) plans to begin holding hearings in March 2010 in preparation for the next multi-year Farm Bill. The Committee will likely hear from a range of different interest groups regarding their preferences and goals for the bill. Peterson noted that his intent is to prepare a baseline measure, and not seek extra money. He is considering developing a new safety net based on whole farm revenue, possibly paired with crop insurance, in order to serve the needs of producers without distorting markets.

**Fate of Disaster Aid Legislation is Unclear.** Agri-Pulse reported this week that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declined to include bicameral agriculture disaster aid legislation (H.R. 4177/S. 2810) in legislation that the House cleared before adjourning for the year. Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Blanche Lincoln, an original cosponsor of the Senate bill, has been discussing the matter with Senate Leadership, as Pelosi has indicated that the House will only take up emergency aid provisions if the Senate does so first.

**House Outlook.** The House adjourned yesterday, likely for the year, after passing the Defense Appropriations measure, **thereby completing its Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriations process.** The chamber may need to reconvene next week if the Senate modifies the Defense bill in the interim, but no changes are expected. In January, the House is expected to work with the Senate on a **final healthcare reform bill** and on **economic recovery legislation.**

**Senate Outlook.** The Senate continues to work on **healthcare legislation**, with the goal of passing a bill by Christmas Eve. Additionally, before the holiday, the chamber is expected to take up the Defense Appropriations bill, which the House passed this week, in order to **complete the Appropriations process.** Upon reconvening next year, the Senate will likely focus on an endgame for healthcare reform and also on **financial regulatory reform legislation.**

**Peterson Running in 2010.** House Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson confirmed that he will seek re-election in 2010, according to MinnPost.com. Given the recent string of Democratic retirement announcements, some had speculated that Peterson would not seek another term. For more information, click [here](#).

## Industry News...

**Farm Journal Media Releases Crop Insurance File.** Farm Journal Media recently announced the release of a crop insurance database detailing both the agents and carriers of crop insurance data for 2008. The file, the first one ever developed for the crop insurance market, includes 10,300 agencies, 23,850 associated agents, 10,687 phone numbers, and 5,627 email addresses. Comparable data for 2009 will be available in July 2010. For more information, click [here](#).