

## Comprehensive Information Management System (CIMS) improves service to farmers buying crop insurance

The Ag Risk Protection Act of 2000 mandated establishment of Comprehensive Information Management System (CIMS) and as of February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 all Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) were granted access to the system. CIMS is a system of computer programs and databases that are used in administration of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation program. CIMS is a vast repository of information that contains producer, program and land information collected by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Risk Management Agency (RMA), Approved Insurance Providers (AIPS) and other USDA agencies. Currently, Approved Insurance Providers are receiving the same information that is found on a FSA 578 (report of acreage) and a set of the producer's maps. The use of CIMS allows AIPs to receive an electronic copy of the information, which enables crop insurance companies to mine information more efficiently and make it accessible to agents and producers more quickly. Use of the Comprehensive Information Management System is a significant advantage over the non-electronic distribution.

AIPS are able to use the CIMS information at their discretion to identify data inconsistencies along with reporting errors. This helps producers and agents to identify and make any necessary corrections **before it is too late**, such as after a claim is filed. Once a claim is filed, producers are not able to make any corrections to their schedule of insurance, often resulting in penalties being applied to that claim resulting in overall lower compensation to the insured.

CIMS data also includes farm maps for each producer which allows AIPS to create a set of maps electronically without visiting the local FSA office. Claims adjusters can also access data immediately that in the past has taken two to three weeks to obtain from the local FSA office. This is an advantage that greatly reduces the time it takes for a producer to receive his claim check. CIMS makes information more easily accessible, allowing for faster and more accurate service which allows the insured to receive compensation while lowering the risk of penalties.

*Harry Daisey is a crop insurance agent servicing farmers in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. He can be reached at 302-337-9400.*