



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Risk
Management
Agency

Raleigh
Regional Office

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September 1, 2009

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL NORTHEAST REINSURED COMPANIES

FROM: LARRY N. ATKINSON /s/ *Wayne Harrifeld*
DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: 2010 VINIFERA GRAPE WRITTEN AGREEMENT GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND:

Section 4G (3), page 84 of the 2007 Crop Insurance Handbook (CIH) allows the RMA Regional Office (RO) to issue additional guidelines to determine adaptability of the crop for written agreement requests. Vinifera grape insurance is offered in Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Suffolk, and Yates Counties, New York within the Raleigh RO region. Vinifera grapes may be insurable in other counties and states if the actuarial requests for vinifera grape are approved by the Raleigh RO.

DETERMINATION:

Vinifera grape vines, especially newly planted grape vines, are susceptible to winter freeze damage. Some vinifera grape varieties are more susceptible to freeze damage than other varieties, but all vinifera grape varieties are susceptible to freeze damage during the first several years after planting. The Raleigh RO will use these additional guidelines to determine whether vinifera grapes may be insurable by a written agreement in states and counties that do not offer vinifera grape rates on the county actuarial documents.

IMPLEMENTATION:

For vinifera grape varieties, at least 4 crop years of certified APH yields, with an average yield of 2.0 tons/acre (after reaching the production minimum of 2 tons/acre) is required by the RMA Raleigh RO before the vinifera grape request can be considered.

Note: Average APH yields less than 2.0 tons/acre may be considered, provided at least 3 years within the past 4 years of APH yield history have produced at least seventy-five percent or greater of the APH yield average and the vineyard inspection is favorable.

The Raleigh RO may consider added acres (blocks) that have reached the production minimum of 2 tons/acre, but have not attained 4 years of records, if there is a block of the same variety already approved under these, or previous crop year Vinifera Grape Written Agreements. Additional documentation for acceptance of an APH with less than 4 years of records must include the location for the requested block of vinifera grapes and the location of a vinifera block of the same variety.

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Actuarial Change Requests for vinifera grapes will be considered by the Raleigh RO if the request is signed by the sales closing date deadline (November 20, 2009). In addition, all required information must be sent to the Raleigh RO, no later than 15 business days after the November 20th deadline date, or December 14, 2009 (Section 3F(2) of the 2010 Written Agreement Handbook). Requests for Actuarial Change and supportive “required” information sent after the December 14th deadline date will be rejected by the Raleigh RO.

Vinifera Written Agreement requests require the following: 1) Request for Actuarial Change Form, 2) Actual Production History (APH) form, 3) Legal Description or Farm Serial Number (FSN) including tract number, 4) Perennial Crop Inspection Report (including Crop Addendum Worksheets), 5) Producer’s Pre-Acceptance Worksheet, and 6) FSA Aerial Photographs, GIS, or GPS maps. In addition to the above requirements, “renewal” written agreements must include a copy of the previous year’s written agreement. New Written Agreement Requests require verifiable records for at least the 3 most recent crop years in the base period and must be submitted to the Raleigh RO by the December 14, 2009 deadline.

The Pre-Acceptance Perennial Crop Inspection Report must show the location of each block of grapes (sketch map and FSA aerial photos), distance from the nearest lake or large body of water, aspect of slope (north, south, east, or west side), elevation, variety, year planted for each variety, acres, and rootstock. Note: The location or “microclimate” is an important risk factor for vinifera grapes.