

MGR-20-013: COVID-19 Relief for Organic Plans and Certificates Due at Acreage Reporting

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Date

May 4, 2020

To

All Approved Insurance Providers

All Risk Management Agency Field Offices

All Other Interested Parties

From

Martin R. Barbre, Administrator /s/ Martin R. Barbre

Subject

COVID-19 Relief for Organic Plans and Certificates Due at Acreage Reporting

Background

Many state and local governments have issued “stay at home” orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic or, in the absence of “stay at home” orders, producers may otherwise be unable to meet certain policy requirements due to concerns of spreading COVID-19.

The Common Crop Insurance Policy Basic Provisions requires that producers with certified organic or acreage in transition to organic have written certification or written documentation from a certifying agent by the acreage reporting date (ARD) which shows an organic plan is in effect for the acreage. The General Standards Handbook states that a certificate and plan must be in place each year to qualify for organic or organic transitional practices. A previous certificate or plan may be used to qualify for insurance until a plan can be updated by a certifying agent.

RMA recognizes the challenges the crop insurance industry and America’s farmers and ranchers face and remains committed to provide flexibility that supports the

health and safety of all parties, while also ensuring the Federal crop insurance program continues to serve as a vital risk management tool.

Action

For the 2020 crop year, approved insurance providers (AIP) may allow a producer to report acreage as certified organic, or as acreage in transition to organic, when the producer provides documentation that they have requested, in writing, a written certification or other written documentation from a certifying agent by the ARD. Producers must continue to use generally recognized organic practices in accordance with their policy.

Producers must notify their agent within 30 days of receiving notification from their certifying agent that their organic plan or certificate was not approved. The producer notification may be made by phone, email, text, or other electronic communication method. AIPs must document the producer's notification. The allowances provided in Manager's Bulletin MGR 20-009 regarding producers' signatures also apply to such notifications. If the requested certificate or plan is not approved, the acreage report and premium may be revised appropriately by the AIP when such notice is timely received from the producer.

Consistent with existing loss adjustment standards, AIPs must verify an organic plan or certificate is in effect for organic practices during the loss adjustment process.

DISPOSAL DATE:

December 31, 2020