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USDA Announces New Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Board Members

News Release |

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 13, 2024 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed three new members of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) Board of Directors, which oversees the Federal crop insurance program available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The FCIC Board of Directors provides guidance to USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) on administering crop insurance.

“RMA’s commitment to representing farmers of all backgrounds who grow a wide variety of crops is reflected by our Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Board of Directors who each represent a certain sector of agriculture and insurance and use their expertise to ensure that all farmers have risk management options to protect their operations,” said RMA Administrator Marcia Bungler, who serves as the FCIC manager. “We’re excited to work with our new board members to continue making improvements to federal crop insurance for the producers we serve.”

Ryan Lankford, Brandon Willis, and Donna King will serve four-year terms beginning this month and Nicole Berg was reappointed to serve a second term.

Mr. Ryan Lankford, a producer representative to the board, grew up in a farm family on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. After serving in the U.S. Army and earning a bachelor's in civil engineering, Lankford returned home. He has helped his family

expand their farming operation to include Red Angus Livestock and Organic Certified crops. Lankford produces winter wheat, spring wheat, canola, peas, lentils, chickpeas, flax and barley on over 10,000 acres of leased Tribal land. He serves as a member of the Tribal Agriculture Expert Committee. Lankford has also served for more than seven years on the county and state FSA committee.

Through the FCIC board, I hope to promote the importance of crop insurance to livestock producers and other farmers who have been able to access new products created by RMA,” Lankford said.

Brandon Willis, an insurance regulator representative to the board, grew up on a fourth-generation sheep ranch in northern Utah. He earned his bachelor’s degree in crop and soil science from Utah State University in Logan, Utah, and his law degree from the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming, before completing a master’s in agricultural law from the University of Arkansas. Early in his career, Willis worked at the National Agricultural Law Center, with the USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service, and for U.S. Senator Max Baucus. In the Obama Administration, Willis served as Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs, overseeing FSA programs under the Production Emergencies and Compliance Division, Conservation and Environmental Programs Division, and Price Support Division. He also served as Senior Advisor to the Secretary on Title I Commodity programs, farm legislation matters, and disaster assistance before being appointed to serve as the RMA Administrator in 2013. Willis works in the College of Agricultural and Applied Sciences at Utah State University and as owner of Ranchers Insurance.

“I know firsthand the challenges that producers face in the agriculture industry and the important role that crop insurance plays when it comes to protecting and ensuring the future of successful agriculture operations,” Willis said. “My background with USDA and experience in crop insurance will allow me to represent the best interests of the producers we serve.”

Donna King, an insurance representative, started with King Crop in 2011 after a twenty-year career with The Washington Post. She is a graduate of Wor-Wic Community College. Throughout King’s career as a crop insurance specialist, she has focused on providing quality customer service to farmers in the Mid-Atlantic region. She lives in Lewes, Delaware. With the King Crop Agency, King sells and services policies for corn, soybeans, lima beans, snap beans, sweet corn, blueberries and

peaches, among other crops. King works to ensure that the Whole Farm Revenue Protection program and Micro Farm program are available to producers in her area. Additionally, King has been a strong advocate for the availability of new policies such as RMA's pilot program for shellfish coverage and the Tropical Storm Option through the Hurricane Insurance Protection – Wind Index endorsement. King also provides sales and services to livestock growers through the Livestock Risk Protection and Livestock Gross Margin protection policies.

“Federal crop insurance is an important tool that can help producers manage risk on their operations,” King said. “I’m looking forward to continuing my efforts to provide an even stronger safety net that represents the diversity of agriculture across New England, as well as in other geographic areas.”

More on the FCIC Board

The FCIC board includes:

- Four producers, at least one of whom is a specialty crop producer.
 - Chris Bardenhagen
 - Howard James
 - Nicole Berg
 - Ryan Lankford
- One individual involved in insurance, often an agent.
 - Donna King
- One individual knowledgeable about reinsurance or regulation.
 - Brandon Willis

The Federal Crop Insurance Act requires that the four producer board members come from diverse geographic areas and represent a cross-section of agricultural commodities.

Board members are appointed to staggered four-year terms and members serve up to two terms.

More Information

More information about the FCIC is available on the [RMA website](#).

RMA has taken numerous steps to improve the reach of crop insurance, including investing in [risk management education](#) and improving insurance options for specialty crop, organic and urban producers. In 2024, RMA invested [\\$4.1 million](#) in Risk Management Education in through partnerships with organizations, such as nonprofits and land grant universities, that will provide training and resources for producers about risk management options. This year's partnership projects will reach every state in the nation.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. A list of insurance agents is available online using the RMA [Agent Locator](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

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