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Thanks to You, It's Working!

It seems pretty safe to say that on both a personal and global level, the uncertainty and stress of the past few years has at times been overwhelming. Global political and economic uncertainty affects all of us and none of us are immune.

That said, it might be worthwhile midway through this year to take stock of where we have been, where we are, and who might hazard a guess as to where we are going.

I would like to put this in the context of the crop insurance industry in which we work and use this opportunity to express my appreciation to the women and men working in crop insurance who have helped to build the incredible industry we have today.

Circling back to where we have been. During the drought year of 1988 approximately 50 million acres were insured. At the time a Blue Ribbon Commission was established to recommend improvements to strengthen the crop insurance program. Fast forward to the 1993 crop season, which was characterized by the disastrous flooding and devastating excessive moisture conditions that prevailed in the Midwest and as a result, the 1994 Crop Insurance Reform Act was passed. Much like the Academy Awards ceremony, there is not the time (or space in my memory banks) to name the host of industry leaders, both private industry and those working for the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, as well the political leadership that set crop insurance on an upward trajectory. Much appreciation to all of those individuals who played a critical role laying the groundwork for the future.

On the heels of the 1994 Reform Act we witnessed the introduction of the revenue po-

lices for the primary grain and oilseed commodities. This policy innovation and coverage expansion fundamentally changed the role of crop insurance in agricultural policy. During that time there were a hand full of “pioneers” who challenged the “status quo” of conventional thinking surrounding crop insurance. Again, the private sector, the USDA, and the political leadership in agriculture at the time all worked together and elevated the stature of our industry. Another round of appreciation is in order.

Well, we cannot rest on the laurels of the 1990s forever. Where are we now and who should we thank for it? Ten years ago we experienced the drought of 2012 with no calls for *ad hoc* disaster. The scale of the 2012 drought was unprecedented and the industry’s loss adjuster force did not fail to deliver. Following 2012, along with both the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills, crop insurance is now considered the cornerstone of the Farm Safety Net. We owe a debt of gratitude to all those who labored tirelessly in 2012 and those who helped shape both the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills. Those efforts should not go unnoticed.

As we consider the present state of our industry, we should be mindful of the recent cooperative efforts of both the private sector and our public partners. In 2019, sections of the Midwest experienced severe crop losses due to prevented planting conditions. The prevented planting claim load was handled successfully and later that summer the crop insurance delivery system was utilized to further help farmers recover from these crop losses sustained in 2019. In 2020, the industry responded to the derecho, which devastated large swaths of

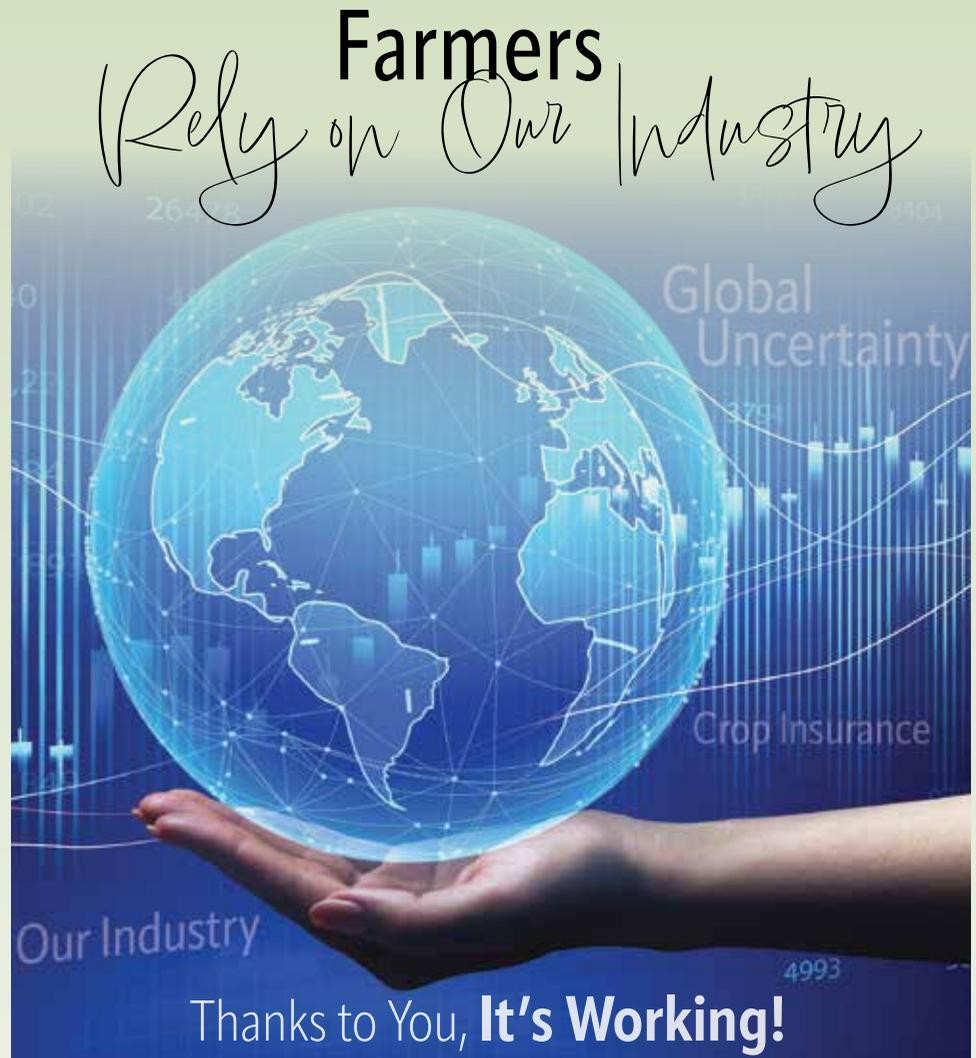
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central Iowa. And during 2020 and 2021, both industry and the Risk Management Agency rolled up their sleeves and met the challenges of delivering crop insurance through the height of the pandemic. Granted, many faced countless hardships these past few years, but thanks to the hard-working women and men of our industry, farmers were protected by crop insurance. Thanks to you, it's working!

In terms of where we are and where we are going, consider the recent policy statements of two major commodity organizations. First, the American Soybean Association. Their policy statement says, "Crop insurance is the most effective and important component of the farm safety net and must remain affordable."

Second, and quite recently, consider the policy priorities of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG). Their policy statement says, "Crop insurance is a critical risk management tool for wheat growers. NAWG opposes any cuts to crop insurance that may jeopardize the capability of the partnership between the federal government and the private insurance industry to deliver risk protection to our members effectively. Recognizing the vital role of crop insurance in the farm safety net, NAWG supports enhancing crop insurance so it can remain affordable and increase its utility and effectiveness."

Crop insurance would not be emphasized or established as a fundamental priority in these organization's policy statements if it was not working. Rather, crop insurance is working, and these farmers rely on our industry. Because of your efforts, our industry has earned this trust. Thanks to you, it's working! We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the support of the NCIS Board of Directors and the many volunteers from our industry who support and participate in the NCIS Regional/State and Standing Committees throughout the year. After the cancellation of all NCIS sponsored loss adjuster schools in 2020, NCIS staff was determined to find a way to effectively train adjusters in a safe and efficient way. With the help of many member company employees and NCIS staff, NCIS held 12 virtual loss adjuster schools from June through November. More than 1,200 people participated in these events that covered Crop-Hail and Federal procedures on cotton, wheat, oats, soybeans, apples, corn, dry beans, hemp, and sunflowers. Thanks to you, crop insurance kept working...



As stated in the introduction of this piece, we face much uncertainty going forward. How events will resolve themselves and what policies are put in place to deal with the challenges before us is anybody's guess. But I do believe we can take this brief moment to reflect upon the accomplishments of our industry and express our appreciation to all of those who have contributed to its success. Thanks to you, it's working!

In This Issue

In this issue of Today® we feature a comprehensive look at 2021 in the annual "Year in Review" article. Please do not be daunted by its length; it is an excellent summary of the planting conditions, commodity markets, and weather events that took place in agriculture and crop insurance last year. The piece starts with the planting and marketing outlook for 2021 and tracks these developments through

the course of the year. It also examines the results in both the Federal- and state-regulated lines of crop insurance, as well as highlighting the Canadian Crop-Hail program.

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, NCIS was able to host in-person training for the Regional/State Crop Insurance Committee chairs. All of the 18 committees were represented by either the chair or vice chair and most were able to meet with NCIS liaisons in person. The training is critical to ensuring that these committees follow industry standardized procedures and represent their individual companies and the industry as a whole in a positive manner. NCIS was also able to begin visiting farmers again this year to talk about the importance of crop insurance. We introduce you to individuals from Arkansas and Mississippi and will feature others as we meet them throughout the year. You can watch their stories, and many others, on the Crop Insurance in America website under "Real Stories."