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[Multi-Peril Crop Insurance Changes Impact Insurability of Summer Fallow Wheat for the 2020 Crop Year](#)

News Release |
Spokane, Washington
|
July 1, 2019

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SPOKANE, Wash., July 1, 2019 — USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) notifies producers impacted by the 2018 Washington fires of RMA’s policy modification by Special Provisions of Insurance which provides relief to farmers who planted a cover crop during the 2019 fallow year.

According to Benjamin Thiel, Director of USDA Risk Management Agency’s Spokane Regional Office, “The fire emergency identified the need to develop an exception for the summer fallow practice when conservation requirements make it necessary. Our office was proud to be able to be a part of the Federal response.”

Wildfires in the Washington counties of Douglas and Okanogan destroyed thousands of acres of harvestable wheat in July 2018. After crop damage was assessed, attention turned to other short/long term concerns including the heightened vulnerability to wind and water erosion on fire scorched land. Various local and federal soil conservation entities advocated and recommended the planting of cover crops to mitigate erosion risk.

For producers with multi-peril crop insurance, concerns were raised because acreage with wheat crops in 2018 could be uninsurable as summer fallow in 2020. Summer fallow is the common cropping practice for wheat producers in North Central Washington. This means every other year the ground is fallow for an entire crop year. Acres of harvestable wheat insured under the summer fallow practice

destroyed in the fires were due to sit fallow during the 2019 crop year. In the past, if a producer planted any crop, including a cover crop during the fallow year, the cropping practice would change from summer fallow to continuous cropping practice. The continuous cropping practice generally has higher crop insurance rates.

As part of the federal response to the wildfires, RMA determined it could modify its Special Provisions of Insurance to grant relief to those farmers who planted a cover crop during the 2019 crop year on their summer fallow acreage insured by Federal Crop Insurance.

Fire-affected producers and others who planted a cover crop during the 2019 crop year, can maintain insurability under the summer fallow practice as long as the cover crop is terminated in accordance with the National Resource and Conservation Services (NRCS) [Cover Crop Termination Guidelines](#).

For more information, visit rma.usda.gov or contact an [approved insurance provider](#).

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