

MGR-20-005

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Date

March 27, 2020

To

All Approved Insurance Providers

All Risk Management Agency Field Offices

All Other Interested Parties

From

Martin R. Barbre, Administrator

Subject

COVID-19 and Crop Insurance Deadlines

Background

Many state and local governments have issued “stay at home” orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may preclude agents from meeting with policyholders or potential policyholders to obtain signatures associated with various reporting requirements, written agreements, and the purchase of new coverage or adjustments to current policy elections. In the absence of “stay at home” orders, agents may be unable to meet in-person with policyholders and potential policyholders due to concerns of spreading COVID-19.

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) recognizes the challenges the crop insurance industry and America’s farmers and ranchers face and will 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.

RMA also encourages Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) to maximize use of remote communication and authorization, such as e-signatures and web portals.

Action

Producer Submission Deadlines for Written Agreements

In accordance with Section 18(e)(1) of the 2020 Common Crop Insurance Policy, Basic Provisions, AIPs are reminded that producers may be able to submit a request for a written agreement after the Sales Closing Date (SCD), but on or before the acreage reporting date, if they are able to demonstrate, including self-certification of COVID-19 related issues, the physical inability to submit the request (or required additional documentation) on or before the SCD.

AIP Submission Deadlines for Written Agreements

In accordance with Para. 23 A (2) & (3) of the 2020 Written Agreement Handbook, RMA is granting AIPs additional time to submit Written Agreement Requests and applicable documentation into the RMA Regional Office Exception (ROE) system. Only Written Agreement Requests that have a Cancellation Date deadline or SCD deadline from the time period of March 15, 2020, to April 15, 2020, are receiving additional time. For these requests, AIPs have until 30 days after the applicable producer submission deadline to submit the Request for Actuarial Change form and all applicable documentation into the RMA ROE system. Written Agreement Requests with deadlines not mentioned above will continue to follow the submission requirements and deadlines in accordance with the 2020 Written Agreement Handbook.

2020 Crop Year Sales and Reporting Deadlines

Notifications may be sent electronically between the policyholder and their AIP. Given the short time period, policyholders may provide information over the phone with appropriate documentation of the call or using electronic methods to select policy elections, such as coverage levels, and for the purpose of reporting acreage and production. If the policyholder sends their reports, including policy elections, in such a matter, they will be required to either sign digitally at the time of submission or must follow up with a properly signed form(s) no later than July 15, 2020. The policyholder agrees to be bound by their certifications based on their initial certification and cannot make changes, other than those authorized by RMA procedure for AIPs, after the applicable deadlines.

This ability is in addition to Manager's Bulletin, MGR 20-006, COVID-19 and Impact on Production Reporting Date (PRD) for Crops Insured Under the Common Crop Insurance Policy, Basic Provisions.

DISPOSAL DATE:

December 31, 2020