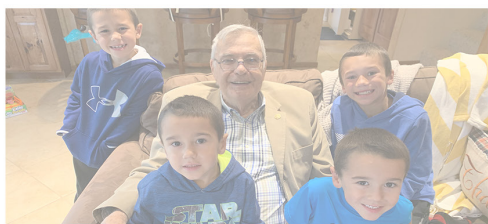


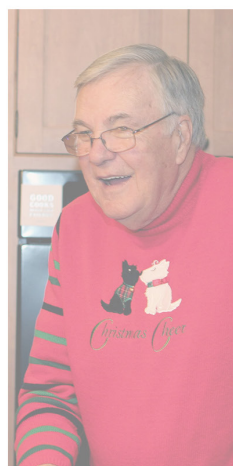
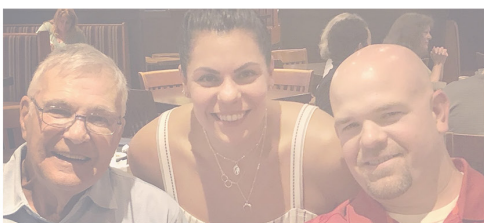
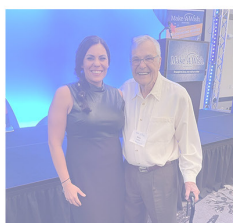
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PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

FROM THE DESK OF
JIM BALDONADO

Greetings,

Starting 2023 will be a little different than in years past. On December 10th, 2022, we lost a long-time employee, one of my best friends, and part of our family. Grandpa Dan joined our staff on February 1st, 1990, and has been a part of our family ever since. But, as Dan would say, "life goes on." It will, just not the same.

Something to be looking at when doing your 2023 MPCCI renewal is your levels of coverage. I'm expecting for prices to be higher than they were in 2022, and I'm also expecting the volatility factors to be higher, which will cause your premium to be higher. I understand none of us like higher premiums and one way they can go down is for all of us to pray for less than \$4.00 corn and \$10.00 soybeans...we all know we don't want that to happen, so the next best thing to do is visit with your agent and get the best bang for your buck.

Corn	Volatility Factor	Base Price	Harvest Price
2011	0.29	\$6.01	\$6.32
2012	0.22	\$5.68	\$7.50
2020	0.15	\$3.88	\$3.99
2021	0.23	\$4.58	\$5.37
2022	0.23	\$5.90	\$6.86

Soybeans	Volatility Factor	Base Price	Harvest Price
2011	0.23	\$13.49	\$12.14
2012	0.18	\$12.55	\$15.39
2020	0.12	\$9.17	\$10.55
2021	0.19	\$11.87	\$12.30
2022	0.19	\$14.33	\$13.81

Maybe look at different levels of MPCCI coverage for your irrigated crops vs. your non-irrigated crops. Look at higher levels of MPCCI and take advantage of the government subsidy. Cut back on some of the hail coverage.

Something I think everyone should look at is APO, which is Added Price Option. This adds extra dollars to your base price set in February, and to the harvest price set in the fall if it's higher than the base price when you have a bushel loss on your MPCCI coverage. This is very important when marketing your crops throughout the year, as I know last year there were some positive basis. If that positive basis comes at harvest time, and you have a large bushel loss, your MPCCI coverage pays only on the average of February (Dec. corn) or the average of October (Dec. corn), whichever is higher. It does not take into account a 0.30-0.50 cent positive basis. This is where APO will help. All renewals must be done by March 15, 2023, as well as signing up for APO.

Added Price Option - APO - Corn

MPCCI Coverage Level	Maximum % Price Election	Additional Price on a Bushel Loss Based on Estimated \$6.50 Corn
70%	42.90%	\$2.79
75%	33.30%	\$2.16
80%	25.00%	\$1.63
85%	17.60%	\$1.14

Continued on page 3...

Over the last 3-4 years most of my customers get their MPCCI renewal and their hail renewal done all at the same time prior to March 15. It makes life so much easier for all of us as you will get busy and it is hard to get you to stop to go over your hail coverage in May; so just take care of it all prior to the March 15 deadline. If something does need to be changed prior to May 31, and there have been no losses, we can make changes.

The hail product of choice is still Companion 80. It totals out at a 25% hail or wind loss and pays within days of adjustment. No waiting until after harvest to see if you have a hail claim or not. I understand there are a few people that really like production hail, or HPP. That is okay as long as everyone knows the delay in payment could be from 2-6 months, and you have the possibility of growing yourself out of some, or all, of your claim.

2022 was one of the largest claim years we have had in years. It is my guess that it dates back to 2010, 2011, and 2012. From the weather forecasts I have seen, 2023 doesn't look to be any better. Make sure you have the correct coverages in place to be ready for what Mother Nature may throw at you.

If I can help in any way, please don't hesitate to give me a call.



DAN TINLIN'S EULOGY

JIM BALDONADO

I started working for The Home Agency in February 1986, and I had no idea what I was getting into, as I was in Life and Health insurance for the last three years. I learned quickly that if you're going to be an insurance agent in a small town you better learn who your main clientele is, and that's a lot of you, farmers and ranchers. So with some help from some company people, I started learning the crop insurance business. In the late '80s I heard of a guy from Gothenburg that was supposed to be pretty good at selling crop insurance and our paths would cross every once in a while at meetings and at different functions. It got to the point where I would invite this guy named Dan Tinlin to Elwood on Friday evenings to have a couple drinks after work.

One night, we may have had a couple too many, and he ended up sleeping on our couch. Well, the next morning our oldest daughter Sara came running in to our bedroom saying, "There is some strange guy sleeping on the couch in his UNDERWEAR!!" Well, honey, that strange guy is never going to leave. He instantly became GRANDPA Dan...not only to us but to most of Elwood, and, in some cases, in Gothenburg as well. He would come to everything he could like birthdays, holidays, and anything that involved getting together with a group of people. My dad passed away in 1980, and when Dan came along in the late '80s, not only did he fill the void that my dad left in my life but like all dads he became one of my best friends and a grandpa to our daughters and grandkids.

As we all know, Dan could strike up a conversation with anyone, especially when it came to talking to pretty women. Dan was a bachelor the entire time I knew him, and some of the one-liners he would use to get a lady to talk to him, I would just shake my head and roll my eyes, but I'll be damned, it worked. Dan was very proud to call Gothenburg his home, and he was also very proud being a partner at The Home Agency. Like I said earlier, there was this guy in Gothenburg that I had heard could sell crop insurance, and, yes, he could. Dan and I have been around the world a time or two at different crop meetings and everywhere we went, he was always the center of attention as he never met anyone he didn't like.

Once Dan and I got together in 1990, we said we were going to be the largest writer of crop insurance in the nation, and it happened, five times in the next 10 years. And each time we were honored at the annual banquet and each time the winner would be presented with a green jacket like the winner of the Masters golf tournament. Dan was very proud of that jacket.

This past summer we were doing some video work and testimonials for The Home Agency with some of our customers. I knew this day was going to come, just didn't think this soon. But I asked Dan to do a little PR video for us and that was right up his alley. He did an outstanding job. The video was not to promote The Home Agency, but to show all of us who Dan Tinlin really was. It showed how important his community was to him, how important you, his customers, were as you instantly became good friends, and parts of it how important my family was to him as well. I tell my staff when they're in a situation where an answer needs to be given, just ask yourself, "What would Jim do?" Well, moving forward when the day may not be as bright as I would like, I will definitely be watching this video, and asking myself, "What would Dan do?" In his earlier days, it was probably golfing or just having a drink with friends, but lately it was going fishing. From fishing in Alaska a number of times and catching a 207 pound Halibut to just fishing on a sandpit, he loved being on the water.

So, Dan, I will say, "Thank You" in advance because spring will be coming soon, I hope, and when I want to get out of the office or out of doing something I don't want to be doing, I will just ask myself, "What would Dan do?" and that will put me on the water. But when I turn around and you're not sitting there, my guess is I will be doing the same thing I am doing now (crying). Love you, Buddy.



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CROP INSURANCE UPDATE

CINDY DAVIS

It's nearing the end of another year as I write this article. Once again, I look back and wonder how the year passed so quickly. For the most part, the crop year was fairly typical, with the exception of all the dryland losses. The adjusters definitely had their work cut out for them toward year-end. I would even bet that by the time this February issue reaches you, there may still be some 2022 losses getting wrapped up. Mother Nature was not very helpful last spring and summer. In fact, a good portion of both Nebraska and Kansas are now in the extreme drought category on the U.S. drought monitor. Many of our agents found themselves not only working losses toward the end of the year, but also writing *Weather Contracts and Pasture, Rangeland and Forage (PRF)* policies prior to December 1st, 2022. Producers were very receptive to any risk management tool that may help lessen any future dryland losses or offset increased inputs. Livestock producers were extremely interested in the PRF policy. That program was designed to give them the ability to help cover replacement feed costs when a loss of forage for grazing or harvested for hay is experienced due to lack of precipitation. If we stay in the current drought cycle for much longer, these are two risk management tools that will gain popularity rather quickly, I'm betting. Hopefully we are blessed with much needed moisture very soon!

2023 Row Crop Sales Closing Deadline

The next crop insurance deadline for our area will be March 15th, 2023. This is the sales closing deadline (SCD) for row crops, and the deadline to have all coverage in place, including changes in current coverage, new policies, transfer policies and cancellations. There have been a lot of changes in the crop insurance industry over the past several years. Many new policies and endorsements have been added, making the sales closing season a tricky one. We encourage you to meet with your agent prior to the SCD to review your policies and elect the coverage that best fits your farming operation. Many producers also take advantage of this time to put their hail coverage in place as well; knowing that changes can still be made

to their hail policies up until mid to late May, or the first of May for wheat in Kansas (assuming no damage has occurred prior to that date). Below are some important reminders and optional endorsements to keep in mind when you meet with your agent.

- Beginning Farmer / Rancher (BFR) and Veteran Farmer / Rancher (VFR) – these endorsements have become increasingly popular for new farmers, and include many benefits that can be applied over a 5-year period for those who qualify. Beginning with the 2021 row crop season, RMA implemented new procedures, allowing participants with farming experience to use Actual Production History (APH) of the previous producer, with permission, on newly acquired land. Previously, the APH could only be used if the beginning or veteran farmer or rancher was involved on the specific acreage acquired.
- Yield Exclusion (YE) – this endorsement also has become a popular option. When elected, a producer can exclude eligible yields from a database. This option is not available on all crops/counties, check with your agent to see if your crops qualify in your county.
- Separate Enterprise Units for Irrigated and Non-Irrigated acreage (if qualified), and separate coverage levels for Irrigated and Non-Irrigated acreage.
- Multi-County Enterprise Unit Endorsement: This pilot endorsement could be useful for producers who have small amounts of acreage in a county contiguous to their primary county, and want to incorporate those acres into an enterprise unit. The contiguous counties must be in the same state and both counties must be insured with the same Approved Insurance Provider. To qualify for a MCEU, one county must individually qualify for the EU election the producer chooses, and the other county does not. In addition, both county crop policies must have the same elections for: MCEU, insurance plan, coverage level, by irrigation practice, if applicable; and enterprise unit by practice.
- Do you raise White Corn or Waxy Specialty Corn? In some states/counties, coverage is available at a more favorable

contract price. See your agent for details – must be elected by SCD.

- Planting may be a few months out, and we hope for optimal weather, but if you find yourself prevented from planting, be sure to contact your agent as soon as possible. You must give notice to your agent within 72 hours after the final planting date for the crop in your county. Don't wait until acreage reporting time to let your agent know – this could jeopardize any possible indemnity.

At SCD time, it is also very important to review current policies. RMA continues to data mine for policy errors. If errors are found after the deadline, we may not be able to correct them for the current crop year, and this could prove detrimental to your coverage! Take the time to sit down with your agent prior to the deadline and review the following reminders as well:

- Make sure you have a policy for every county you need coverage in, and you have all the crops on the policy you want to insure! If you have acquired new ground or intend to, a new application will be needed prior to Sales Closing Deadline.
- Verify all the information on your policy...coverage plans, coverage levels, and options. Also, double check the entity name, and EIN for the primary insured and all the people listed under that entity.
- Has there been an entity change? (A recent marriage, or divorce, a new trust or partnership set up, has someone on the policy passed away). If an entity, such as a corporation or partnership or joint venture has had someone pass away, the crop companies may require legal documentation to verify whether or not the entity lawfully continues.
- Trend Adjustment (TA) – although this is not a new option, it could prove very beneficial to your yields. The TA option adjusts yields in qualifying databases to reflect increases in yields through time in the county. If you haven't already looked at this option, it would definitely be one to look at with your agent, if it is available for your county/crops/practices. This option must be elected by Sales Closing as well.
- In addition to TA, there are many options available for row crops. Yield Adjustment (YA), Yield Exclusion (YE – mentioned above), Yield Cup (YC), contract pricing and seed corn endorsements to name just a few. Check your policy and visit with your agent to make sure your coverage is optimized.
- Have you broken out new ground or Native Sod? If so, a written agreement may be needed to request coverage on this acreage. These requests are also due by Sales Closing Deadline. Native Sod acreage comes with very strict regulations. It would be a good idea to check with your agent before you break Native Sod acreage to go over the rules and coverage available. In most cases, there are significant decreases in coverage for four years and also a loss of premium subsidy.
- Are you an organic producer? There is coverage available in most areas for organic crops. Let your agent know if you will be farming organically. Your agent will also need, on the date your acres are reported, a current

organic plan, a written organic certificate, or documentation from a certifying agency indicating an organic plan is in place.

- Contract Pricing is available in certain counties for certain specialty crops and also for some organic crops. Ask your agent about this option if you are considering a contract price for some of these types of crops.
- If you will be using Precision Farming techniques in your farming operation, be sure to check with your agent for the crop insurance rules regarding this method of reporting.
There are a number of requirements that must be met with Precision Farming, and they begin with planting.
- Conservation Compliance was among many of the changes added with the 2014 Farm Bill, and it still causes several errors each year. All producers should have an AD1026 on file with FSA. For some of you, this is nothing new, but where we run into issues with crop insurance is with new farmers. If someone new begins farming they also need to have the AD1026 on file with FSA. Many new producers are not aware of this rule. Keep in mind also, a new entity also has to have the AD1026 signed. For example, if you have been farming as a married entity but then decide to farm as an LLC or different type of entity – that new entity must sign the AD1026 as well. In an effort to help new farmers with this, RMA has a "First Time Farmer Certification" which is a one-time exception form that may help them keep subsidy the first year of farming. If you are a new farmer, it is very important that you check with FSA and complete Conservation Compliance paperwork there in addition to the crop insurance forms.

With higher commodity prices, as well as the higher inputs, you might want to look into the many supplemental policies available to help protect your bottom line. There are several private supplemental policies to consider, and most of them need to be written by the Sales Closing Deadline. One of the most popular supplements our agents write is called Added Price Option (APO). With APO, if you have a yield loss on an eligible crop, you are able to buy up the price and add to your insured value per bushel. Some other supplemental policies include: Late Plant Option (LPO), Replant Option (RO), Base Price Modifier (BPM), and RpowerD, among others. There are also federally subsidized options available such as: Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO). As you can tell, it's definitely a lot of information to soak in, let your agent help explain, and tailor a package that will fit your individual farming operation. Below you will find the chart detailing when prices are set for the 2023 row crops.

2023 Row Crop Prices

Revenue Protection/Yield Protection	Projected Price Tracking Dates
Corn	February 1 - February 28 December Corn - CBOT
Grain Sorghum*	February 1 - February 28 December Corn - CBOT
Soybeans	February 1 - February 28 November Soybeans - CBOT

*Multiplied by price percentage relationship between corn and grain sorghum, as determined by RMA

2023 Wheat – Short Rate Deadline

March 15th, 2023 is also the deadline for short rating wheat. This option is available in most counties. If you would like to short rate your 2023 wheat, and pay a reduced premium (normally 35% of the original premium), you must submit a written notice to your agent **on or before March 15th, 2023**. Short rating wheat gives producers the option to pay the reduced premium and intentionally destroy the crop before harvest, by grazing or other means. Short rating wheat will not have any impact on the approved production history (APH).

ARC or PLC Election - 2023

One other deadline on this date is your ARC/PLC choices. If you haven't been in to FSA to make your 2023 program election for Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC), enrollment is open and that deadline is also March 15, 2023. These safety net programs through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), help producers weather the variations in either revenue or price, for certain crops.

2022 Row Crop Production

One final reminder, if you haven't turned in your 2022 row crop production, please get it to your agent as soon as possible. Your agent will update your crop databases (APH's) and be able to get you the most accurate quotes for your 2023 coverage, once your production is in. The chart below will show you where the 2022 Harvest prices were set.

2022 Row-Crop Prices

Crop	States	Projected Price Set - Yield Protection (YP) and Revenue Protection (RP)	Harvest Price - Revenue Protection (RP)
Corn	NE, KS, IA, CO	\$5.90	\$6.86
Grain Sorghum	NE, KS, IA, CO	\$5.88	\$6.83
Soybeans	NE, KS, IA, CO	\$14.33	\$13.81



What will your risks be in 2023?



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crop insurance agent today
to outline a plan that's right
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INSURING HEIFERS WITH LRP

ARLYN RIEKER

Insuring heifers with LRP

One common question I frequently hear is: “Why would I insure my heifers if the coverage price is a 10% reduction in price compared to the steers?” Using the following illustrations, I will show the 10% reduction is just a number applied to the heifers, and it is still a good risk management decision to insure your heifers alongside the steers.

First, let me show some comparisons most of you have seen before that applies the Price Adjustment Factors (PAFs) to the LRP feeder cattle prices.

The first table shows examples of the PAFs being applied to the coverage prices when the Steer 2 price is set at \$203.92 per cwt. This price was from the December 16th quote for 600-1000# steers using the 47 week endorsement with an ending date of November 10th, 2023.

Coverage prices/Steer 2 price is \$203.92			
Insured Weight range		Steers	Heifers
Type/wt. 1	< 6.0 cwt.	\$224.31 (110%)	\$203.92 (100%)
Type/wt. 2	6.0 – 10.0 cwt.	\$203.92 (100%)	\$183.53 (90%)

The second table applies the PAFs to the ending prices using the December 13th, 2022 Feeder Cattle Index of \$179.46 per cwt.

Example of Ending Prices/Index set at \$179.46			
Insured Weight Range		Steers	Heifers
Type/wt. 1	< 6.0 cwt.	\$197.41 (110%)	\$179.46 (100%)
Type/wt. 2	6.0 – 10.0 cwt.	\$179.46 (100%)	\$161.51 (90%)

From these tables you can see how the PAFs are applied to the steers and heifers for both weight classes, for both the coverage and ending prices.

Some points to remember:

- Price adjustment factors (PAFs) are applied to the expected ending values, coverage prices, and actual ending values prior to RMA publishing.
- LRP feeder cattle insurance coverage prices and rates are based on the CME Feeder Cattle contract, which is settled to the cash or the CME Feeder Cattle index (ending price) and both of these change daily.
- The CME Feeder Cattle contract and the CME Feeder Cattle index (700-899 pounds) are only based on the price for steers. Because the CME Feeder Cattle futures prices are for steers, these PAFs are used to calculate expected ending values, coverage prices, and actual ending values for the types of cattle in the prior tables.

Looking back at the two prior comparison tables and the three points to remember, the next table is a comparison applying the PAFs to the steers, heifers and unborns. This compares the coverage prices, cost per cwt/head and paid losses in what I tried to illustrate in a “make sense” format. Looking at the cost per head, when insuring a 900# heifer 2, you are receiving a 10% discount/savings in premium compared to the same 900# steer 2. The steer costing \$59.85 and heifer \$53.91. If you don’t have a loss, you have saved 10% cost on the heifer; if you do have a loss the savings in premium added back to the loss payment is almost the same as the steer loss payment. Comparing the 900# weight 2, the steer loss payment is \$220.14 and the heifer is \$198.18 which is 10% less, but when you add in the \$5.94 you saved on the heifer premium, it narrows the gap at \$220.14 for the steer and \$204.12(\$198.18 + \$5.94) for the heifer.

Also, notice the heifer 2 (90%) loss payment is 10% less than the steer 2 (100%) and the steer 1 (110%) is 10% higher than the heifer 1 (100%). The losses correspond to the PAFs just like the coverage price and premium.

Insured weight range		< 600#			600 - 900#		
		STEERS WT 1	HEIFERS WT 1	UNBORN	STEERS WT 2	HEIFERS WT 2	
PAF (Price adjustment factors)		110%	100%	105%	100%	90%	
Coverage price/cwt Steer 2	\$203.92	\$224.31	\$203.92	\$214.12	\$203.92	\$183.53	
Gov't cost/cwt		\$11.26	\$10.23	\$10.75	\$10.23	\$9.21	
Producer cost/cwt (35%) Subsidy		\$7.32	\$6.65	\$6.98	\$6.65	\$5.99	
Insured Weight lbs.		599.00	599.00	599.00	900.00	900.00	
x Cost/cwt		\$7.32	\$6.65	\$6.98	\$6.65	\$5.99	
Cost/head		\$43.85	\$39.83	\$41.81	\$59.85	\$53.91	
Heifer savings/head			\$4.02			\$5.94	
Feeder Cattle Index (Ending price)	\$179.46	\$197.41	\$179.46	\$188.43	\$179.46	\$161.51	
Coverage price		\$224.31	\$203.92	\$214.12	\$203.92	\$183.53	
Ending price		\$197.41	\$179.46	\$188.43	\$179.46	\$161.51	
Loss/cwt		\$26.90	\$24.46	\$25.69	\$24.46	\$22.02	
cwt/insured		5.99	5.99	5.99	9.00	9.00	
Payable Loss/head		\$161.13	\$146.52	\$153.88	\$220.14	\$198.18	
Cost savings per head/heifer			\$4.02			\$5.94	
Total loss payment/head		\$161.13	\$150.54	\$153.88	\$220.14	\$204.12	

Coming back to the original question: Should I or should I not insure my heifers? In my experience of writing this coverage for the last 18 years and reviewing the comparison, the answer to the question is “yes.” Insuring your heifers is a good risk management decision.

If you notice, on the table above I have included the unborn type. This has been a great addition to the LRP policy. You can now insure Unborns (unborn calves) as long as you have ownership of the pregnant female. These are just an average coverage price of the steer and heifers 1 types and are insurable <600#. This has been, and continues to be, a viable option to insuring the calves prior to calving.

One other item, if you have visited with me in the past or are considering insuring fed cattle (1,000 – 1,600#), the recent increase in the premium subsidy has made LRP an attractive option for coverage on the cattle you have in the lots for finishing.

Next, I want to share a couple endorsements that recently expired upon writing this. As you can see in the chart to the right, some of these coverages paid out significant losses and some of the producers basically broke even and got their premium back.

Insured Weight	Effective Date	Ending Date	Coverage Price/cwt	Ending Price/cwt	Loss per Head	Cost per Head
850# Steer	7/19/22	12/13/22	\$185.87	\$179.46	\$54.49	\$48.33
700# Steer	7/20/22	12/14/22	\$183.89	\$179.50	\$30.73	\$36.80
800# Steer	7/12/22	12/6/22	\$183.75	\$179.02	\$37.84	\$41.56
750# Heifer	8/11/22	12/8/22	\$168.91	\$161.30	\$57.07	\$32.60

I always like to look back and see how the LRP coverage has performed and looking back over 2022 and forward to 2023, here are some numbers I find interesting. Visit chart to the right.

These quotes were all run on December 16th and have ending dates November 10th the following year. As you can see the

	Type	Weight	Coverage/cwt	Coverage/head	Cost/cwt	Cost/head
2022	Steer	900#	\$175.99	\$1,583.91	\$6.67	\$60.03
2023	Steer	900#	\$203.92	\$1,835.28	\$6.65	\$59.85
2022	Steer	599#	\$193.58	\$1,159.54	\$7.33	\$43.91
2023	Steer	599#	\$224.31	\$1,343.62	\$7.32	\$43.85

cost/head is fractionally less to the same and the coverage per head for the 900# steer is \$27.93/cwt higher and the 599# steer is \$30.73/cwt higher in 2023 than 2022. Better coverage, same basic premium one year later.

Livestock Risk Protection

LRP is exactly what the names says, “Risk Protection.” LRP provides protection against a decline in prices below the established coverage price for fed and feeder cattle. With the uncertainty and volatility in the markets, LRP is a viable risk management tool to aid you as a livestock producer on your bottom line. If any of you have questions regarding the LRP policy and coverage, please don’t hesitate to call.

Lastly, with 2022 in the rearview mirror I would like to send out a big “Thank You” to all the families in production agriculture. As a farmer and former cattle producer myself, I’ve been proud to work with all of you. One last note, please remember the producers and families affected by the blizzards and harsh weather. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them for their livestock and most importantly, their families’ livelihood and safety.

The Home Agency LRP agents are located in many of the offices and locations of these offices are listed on the back page of this publication. If you have any questions about LRP, don’t hesitate to call.



PHOTOS FROM YOU!

We would love to see YOUR view from home! If you would like to see your photos featured in our magazine, please submit all entries to jedson@thehomeagency.com.

- | | | | |
|----------|---------------|----|-----------------|
| 1. | Makayla Lauby | 7. | Teresa Osborn |
| 2, 3, 4. | Ben Rand | 8. | Diane O'Donnell |
| 5, 6. | Jacey Edson | | |



IT'S THE PERFECT TIME OF YEAR

TINA MUIR

Football is in the books, the holidays are over, and the weather is just...well let's just say spring can't come soon enough! It just so happens I have a great idea to occupy some of your time and give you a warm feeling to boot. It's the perfect time of year to take inventory of your "stuff".

When an insurance company asks you to complete a list of your personal property to indemnify you in the event of a total loss would you be able to? Spring of 2022 left many of our neighbors, friends, and family in this situation after the fires destroyed their homes. Here are a few easy steps to create your home inventory and get that warm fuzzy feeling of having your inventory complete. Always keep your home inventory up-to-date and in a safe place.

Do one room at a time and do not forget what is in your cabinets, closets, and drawers.

Start by taking pictures or a video giving brief descriptions but be sure to note higher-value items. I have listed examples below.

- Kitchen: 12 place setting Fiesta ware, 9-piece cookware set, 1 blender, Whirlpool microwave.
- Bedroom: (Do clothing by category) 5 pairs jeans, 3 pairs sneakers, 2 leather belts, Sorel insulated boots
- Storage Closet: 5-piece Samsonite luggage, Callaway men's golf clubs, 2 tennis rackets, king air mattress
- Record serial numbers on such items as antiques, fine art, guns, jewelry, and electronic apparatus. These types of personal property are only covered to a certain limit (\$2,000 or less) without endorsing your homeowner policy to list and schedule these items for their value. Do you have them scheduled? For example, jewelry is limited to \$2,000 on most homeowner policies without being scheduled.
- Don't forget those items tucked away in the attic, in the basement storage room, the garage, out on the patio, in your storage unit off-premise, or perhaps the hedge trimmer your neighbor borrowed last fall.

Now that you have your home inventory complete make sure to save your inventory in more than one place or on more than one device. Oh, and do not forget to mark your calendar for exactly this time next year to update your inventory! It's the perfect time of year!

REGIONAL News

Hear from our
agents in your area!

Dave Meyer

Ruskin, NE

The calendar says 2023, which is unbelievable to me. It doesn't seem like the Y2K scare was almost a quarter century ago. The calendar also says we are just a month or two away from the wheels turning for the next growing season. Hopefully, we will get some much-needed moisture to carry us through another year.

To all my clients: Thank you for allowing me to work with you in the past, and I pray that you will give me the opportunity to supply your crop insurance needs in the future.

Andrew Bellamy

Ansley, NE

Well, winter did finally arrive mid-December and the mild ending to the year, where at least one day of the week was near record highs, has passed. Yields are coming in and between the hail and heat the yields were a little off, but considering the circumstances of the historic drought conditions, it was to be expected. Looking into next year, consider where you were this year with bushels and price. The price has really gotten up there. Are you guaranteed enough bushels to take advantage of a great price, or do we need to talk about increasing your coverage for next year?

Our house is rocking as one would expect. Christmas is among us, and as I get older I'm keenly aware of what adding a third child to the mix has done to my life. For starters, I didn't get as many Christmas lights out as I would've liked, and I'm more tired than I remember after the last two! But for a daughter it will

be worth it! Penelope is doing great and at the moment is sleeping through the night maybe half the time, which makes Megan happy, which helps me stay happy (and well rested). She's really getting a personality! Lincoln is always following his older brother Maverick. We told Mav that Linc wants to be just like his older brother, so be careful that you are teaching and showing him the right things! Maverick is always up for a new game and Santa brought him several that we will be trying for several months and mastering. Megan is great and back to the swing of work after taking some time with Penny and it has been fun celebrating the holidays together as a family of five.

As always, thank you for your business. It is a pleasure working with all of you. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you. Finally, I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a good start to a happy New Year!

Enos & Jill Grauerholz

Beloit, KS

Here it is, the end of January and we are SO dry. We have had no real moisture for months, and we just received 5 inches of snow. We hope to continue getting moisture for our grass and ponds. We will be starting to get out spring quotes soon. We still think APO is a decent buy on soybeans. It paid off very well in 2022. We need to have your renewals in before March 15.

Also any wheat you would like to short rate needs to be signed before March 15th.

We are enjoying our 1 year old grand-

son this year. He is so much fun and is full of joy. We hope you are having a great 2023 with your loved ones as well.

Rhonda Jones

Kirwin, KS

Winter greetings from north central Kansas! I'm writing this the last week of December and enjoying the 48 degrees compared to a week ago with below-freezing and 50-mile-an-hour winds. Locally, we are still in a drought area and praying for some measurable moisture in the New Year.

If you were looking for my scone recipe from the last issue, it's on the following page!

Thank you for your business, stay safe and healthy, and I'll see you in 2023!

Clark Redding,

Larned, KS

It's cold! As I write this, it's 70 below in Montana, 50 below in Nebraska, and a balmy 40 below in Kansas. We could sure use some snow with these awful temperatures. So far, it's lots of wind and very little snow.

What a year! I started in this business in 1988-89. There was severe drought everywhere. There were claims on every piece of non-irrigated cropland. Wheat, corn, milo, soybeans...the drought got them all. This year has been worse than back then. We are lucky to have better coverages and higher prices...some of those loss checks this year were a God-send.

Here's to a better year in 2023.
Happy New Year to all my friends and customers. I hope to see you soon.

Kevin Ross
McClelland, IA

Greetings, from Southwest Iowa. We wrapped up the fall with a great stretch of weather and stayed away from the snow around here. The yields were great in some areas with others having significant issues. It was one of those borderline years that the crop was just barely hanging on and ended up surprising some folks both good and bad. Though we stayed away from the hail storms this year, some of the lower yields have made the guys that took out APO look really smart. When losses do occur that little extra shot in the arm from the added price is awfully helpful.

We hope the new year starts out strong with prices hanging in there and maybe some carry comes back into the market for those of us that filled the bins. Supplies remaining tight will hopefully reward us all and give us a nice spring price when we get there as well.

The cattle market remains hot lately and I hope you all were able to support it with a giant corn-fed prime rib over the Holiday Season.

Looking forward to serving your crop insurance needs in 2023! Happy New Year!

Ben Rand
Benkelman, NE

It's been my first true winter in western Nebraska. From arctic temps to the wild western Nebraska snow, my kids got a taste of reality when it comes to what winters here are supposed to be like, and I'm told it's mild compared to what it could have been.

Noah's football wrapped up with Elwood making a run at state. He's on to wrestling and gone every night. Noelle finished up volleyball and is now in basketball and it's a little lighter schedule with her than Noah since she's in Jr high.

PRF is wrapped up, and coverage is in place for this year. Wheat is in the ground and trying to find moisture. Spring crop renewals are around the corner and I've already spoken to some of you. Long term weather models show significant improvement for moisture in the Western KS/Western NE/Eastern CO tri-state area. We will see I guess.

Corn exports are dismal, but domestic usage is as expected. Analysts are calling for 92-93m acres, a huge uptick from last year. If realized, this would not be constructive for corn prices. Despite Argy struggles with weather, Brazil is harvesting the largest ever bean crop on record. Domestic bean usage is strong and exports are 4% over USDA expectations.

Look forward to seeing all of you in the months to come on renewals. Here's to a better year!

Strawberry Cream Cheese Scones

- 2 ¼ cups (282 grams) all purpose flour
- ¼ cup (50 grams) white sugar
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cups unsalted butter, cubed and cold
- 4 oz cream cheese, cubed and cold
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2/3 cup chopped fresh strawberries

Vanilla Glaze

- 1 ½ cups powdered sugar
- 2 -3 Tbsp water
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- Instructions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly flour and 8 inch round cake pan. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside

Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt together in a large bowl.

Once combined, cut in the butter and cream cheese with a pastry cutter or squeeze with your fingers tips until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

Whisk together heavy whipping cream, egg, and vanilla extract. Slowly add the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients, and mix just until combined. Add in strawberries, and mix until combined.

Turn dough out into a lightly floured surface, and knead briefly, just until dough comes together. Press dough into prepared cake pan. Turn out onto a pastry mat and using a sharp knife or bench scraper cut into 8 wedges. Transfer wedges to prepared baking sheet.

Place in freezer for 20 minutes. Bake 15-16 minutes or until tops are golden brown.

While scones are cooling, whisk together icing ingredients. Brush on top of scones with a pastry brush.



REDUCING YOUR INSURANCE COSTS

DIANE O'DONNELL

Distinguishing Bad Advice from Good Advice

Many Americans are struggling financially in the current economy, particularly those struck by layoffs, and are faced with tough decisions about how to reduce expenses. As a result, much has been written recently about how to reduce insurance premiums as one aspect of a belt-tightening strategy.

Unfortunately, too much of this advice has been bad, and much of this bad advice comes from consumer websites and publications that have little understanding of insurance and risk management. The purpose of this article is to identify some of the bad advice being discussed and to reinforce some of the good advice. Here are 10 reasonable things you can do to reduce or control your insurance costs.

1. Investigate coverage and product options with your independent insurance agent.

One of the advantages of using an independent agent is that she/he represents a number of insurers with different products and can assist customers in fitting the right product at the right price for the unique exposures you present. Keep in mind that a lower price often means inferior service and lesser coverage, possibly lesser to a greater degree than the premium decrease. Also note that this tip deliberately avoids advising you to shop around because that implies price comparisons should drive the decision.

2. Carefully consider whether increasing deductibles now is appropriate.

While increasing a deductible can save money, it's important to do it at the right time. Don't raise the property deductible well past the point of sensible premium reduction on the theory that "it will never happen to me"....insurance purchasing decisions are often made with little regard to post-loss consequences of our current buying decisions. A higher deductible could pay for itself in 3-5 years, but it could take 7-10 years and not be a good investment., The preferred approach is to increase deductibles during good economic times when you can afford a \$1000-\$2500 loss while accumulating a deductible fund that can be used during hard times if a loss actually occurs then.

3. Consider multiple-policy discounts.

This is common advice and generally good advice. Having homeowners, auto and umbrella policies in the same company will likely save money and perhaps even more important, will make it less likely that a coverage gap will show up when more than one insurance company is involved in a claim. Likewise, in business insurance, having general liability and auto coverage in the same insurer using ISO-Standard or superior forms is often critical.

4. Ask for credits.

Too often, consumers are entitled to credits for alarms, extinguishers, good student driving discounts, etc. but the agent is not aware of them. Ask your agent for a list of everything that could reasonably reduce your premium. Unless you tell your agent about these kinds of changing circumstances, you will not reap the benefits of reduced risk.

5. If you are going to drop coverages, consider dropping noncritical coverages.

Examples include towing and rental reimbursement, credit insurance, etc. Your independent agent can assist you in making these decisions. Consider discontinuing high-risk activities such as ATV's, jet skis, etc. Catastrophic injuries are common with vehicles of these types.

6. Carefully consider dropping physical damage coverage on your vehicle.

As outlined above, this is not always a good idea unless you can absorb a significant 4 or even 5-figure loss. Keep in mind, too, that as an auto loses value, the physical damage premium generally declines as well. Do not be fooled by any simple formula that says you should drop coverage when the value of the vehicle drops below "X" times the premium. You should base your decision on what you can afford to lose and, if your car was destroyed and you could not replace it, how would that affect you financially?

7. Weigh risk management alternatives to insurance.

For example, you could place jewelry in a safety deposit box rather than scheduling it. Needless to say, this is probably more risky, but it's a reasonable consideration. Also, do not cut back on maintenance and loss control procedures that yield long-term benefits like the reduction of frequent losses and those often excluded by insurance policies.

8. If necessary, sell some possessions.

Can you get by without certain autos, motorcycles, ATV's, jet skis and boats, homes, jewelry, guns, etc.? If so, you can drop the insurance on those items. However, it is generally a good idea to not drop insurance on property until your exposure to loss no longer exists. This is especially true of any possession that has a significant liability exposure.

9. Seek expert advice.

Start with your independent insurance agent who is familiar with you and your circumstances, not a consumer web site or publication that presents generalized, sometimes suspect, advice, nor someone who lacks the training and experience to provide sound insurance advice. Work with your agent to seek outside advice from other experts. If you are getting insurance advice from your attorney or accountant, run it by your insurance agent to see what impact it might have on your policy coverages.

10. Question any advice you get, even the advice in this article(

It may not be right for you. Before you make decisions to reduce or eliminate insurance coverages, assess your risks of loss. What are your exposures? What can you lose? What exposures represent losses you cannot afford? What exposures can you retain? The quality of your decisions may be the difference between economic survival and bankruptcy. Carefully choose an insurance representative who can help assess risk with a degree of sophistication. Please contact The Home Agency to review your coverages and insurance needs.

**Information provided by Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America*



EIGHT QUESTIONS THAT CAN HELP YOU FIND A TAX PREPARER

AL KUZMA

It's Monday January 23, 2023, as I write this. The NFL Championship games will feature the Cincinnati Bengals at the Kansas City Chiefs in the AFC game. In the NFC game the San Francisco 49ers will play at the Philadelphia Eagles. It is also the official start of tax season! Over half of American tax filers use a professional. It has been my observation that most tax filers have a long relationship with their tax preparer. In case you do not have a tax professional and are looking for one, I came across a very helpful article, published by Northwestern Mutual Life, that I would like to share with you.

Here are the questions you need to ask according to NML:

1. Do you have a preparer tax identification number? Anyone who charges a fee to prepare taxes must register with the IRS and receive a preparer tax identification number (PTIN). In the past, anyone was allowed to prepare a tax return, now the PTIN is required.
2. What type of representative rights do they have? Tax preparers fall into one of two main representation categories. Those who have "unlimited representation rights" can represent clients on any matter, ranging from audits to collections issues to appeals. Those who have "limited representation rights" can only intervene on behalf of people whose returns they prepared and signed and only under specific circumstances. According to the IRS, tax professionals with unlimited representation rights include attorneys, certified public accountants (CPA) and enrolled agents (EA), or those who have passed a three-part IRS enrollment exam.
3. Is your experience a good fit for my situation? If you know your tax situation is not typical, make sure the professional you hire is someone who has completed returns like yours. Working with a tax preparer who is familiar with your line of work can be the difference between claiming all the deductions you are eligible for and forfeiting money. If your taxes are more complicated than the average person's-you're self-employed, own a business or rental property, live in one state but work in another state, or worked abroad-you need a preparer who is well versed in these specific situations.
4. What is your fee? Before you agree to hire someone, make sure you discuss what you can expect to pay. Some tax professionals may charge their clients based on the number of forms filed, while others charge hourly. The IRS recommends avoiding a preparer who wants to charge you a percentage of your refund.
5. Do you belong to any professional organizations? Being a member of a professional organization is not a requirement to be a tax preparer, but it can be a sign that whoever you are considering is serious about the profession. Many organizations including the National Society of Accountants (NSA), the National Society of Enrolled Agents (NAEA) and the National Association of Tax Professionals (NATP) -hold members to a special code of ethics, which may give you additional peace of mind.
6. Can you help me understand recent tax code changes? The tax code is constantly changing. Whoever you hire must be intimately familiar with these changes and how they might affect your return each year. If they're not, you may find yourself leaving money on the table or worse paying a fine and fees for improper filing. Just one example, consider that for the 2022 tax year, the standard deduction rose for all taxpayers: \$400 for single taxpayers and married individuals filing separately; \$600 for heads of household and \$800 for married couples filing jointly. You should ask your tax preparer if they can explain any recent changes to the tax code and how that will impact your return.
7. What would working with you look like? How do they prefer to communicate? Do they like to meet in person, or are you comfortable working remotely via telephone, email and text? Second, how often would you like to communicate with your preparer? Is once a year adequate or do you need multiple meetings to discuss tax strategies?
8. Finally, what will they need to get started? In most cases, a tax preparer will need a copy of your most recent tax return. Perhaps income statements. Most will need proof of expenses and finally, identification (names, birth dates, Social Security numbers)

So, there you have it folks, Happy Tax Season. Until next time, God Bless.



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