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World News Summary from AgrolInsurance

May 2021



Dear Colleagues,

AgrolInsurance International presents your monthly news summary, which highlights important issues on agricultural losses, risk events and recent trends in agricultural insurance worldwide.

We wish you a great day!

USA - Climate change prompts talk of permanent USDA disaster fund

The USDA operates a number of relief programs, triggered by disaster designations, and federally subsidized crop insurance offers some protection against losses but Congress often writes multibillion-dollar disaster packages in response to catastrophic losses inflicted by hurricanes, floods, or drought. The stopgap disaster bills may require several weeks of work before enactment.

The government must respond rapidly to the destructive weather that accompanies climate change, said House Agriculture chairman David Scott, so he is working on legislation to create a permanent disaster aid fund at the USDA. "Many of farms are done away with because we move too slow" in drafting and passing relief bills, he said.

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USA - Large hail causes extensive damage to central Kansas wheat crops

Some areas of central Kansas are seeing extensive damage to wheat crops from large hail that fell on May 26, with slow-moving storms. As flooded fields begin to dry up, farmers in Ellsworth County spent next day assessing the damage from the night before. Strong winds and large hailstones flattened winter wheat fields west of Holyrood.

Stems are broken and bent and the heads lay in the mud. Farmers near Holyrood said this is the second straight year they're seeing hail damage about one month out from harvest. Thankfully, there's insurance. If a field is bad enough to where it's not even harvestable, farmers possibly looking at planting a different crop.

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India - Maharashtra farmers got lowest crop claims payout in 2020

Farmers in Maharashtra have received the lowest-ever payout in 2020 under the Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme since the scheme began in 2016. Farmers received Rs 823 crore, which amounts to just 14% of the Rs 5,801 crore premium paid to insurance companies. Only 12.3 lakh farmers benefited from the claims, also the lowest number since the scheme began. They account for 10% of the 1.2 crore cultivators who had applied for crop insurance in 2020.

But insurance companies say that claim payments were less because 2020 was a good year. "In kharif 2020, the rainfall conditions received were optimal which led to a good harvest. This resulted in a lesser number of claim intimations. However, the claims received were settled as per the guidelines," said Bajaj Allianz General Insurance. The final figures for the rabi season in the state are still coming in.

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Slovakia - Farmers count losses, fields with harvest have been flooded

Flooded rivers in some places in Slovakia have damaged crops. Farmers who live close to rivers are now counting their losses. The situation is especially unfavourable around the Hron basin. The Hron flooded arable soil in several places. Farmers from Badín in the Banská Bystrica district are dealing with flooded rye and lucerne fields, which were supposed to be mowed during this time of year.

Growers in the Levice district, especially near Želiezovce, are also suffering the consequences of local flooding. Exact losses are not determined until the water recedes. These days, farmers in the most affected areas report individual damages to insurance companies. Insurance companies urge them to insure more of their crops because the state will reimburse them for part of the premium.

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Moldova - Farms experience first hail damage in 2021

Mid May, rain and hail struck northern parts of Moldova. The agricultural lands of the Soldanesti region suffered the most from the hail. Large hailstones seriously damaged tens of hectares of fruit orchards in some villages of the region. Still, insurance company experts argue that there are few cases of requests from farmers to conduct damage surveys. Employees of insurance companies assume that hail has mostly damaged the small farms which do not have insurance.

It was mainly the leaf cover that suffered from the hail, and not the fruit which in most cases is not yet formed due to the cold weather. Experts in this regard note that such mechanical damage to fruit trees, as shown by the consequences of the April 2017 snowstorm, can have a paradoxical effect: to somewhat reduce the amount of harvest, but significantly increase the quality and size of the remaining fruits.

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Spain - Stone fruit in Valencia damaged by fourth hail storm in a month

Valencian agricultural producers are enduring a crazy spring, with a record number of rainy days and four hail storms over this past month. A few days ago, a new hail storm hit stone fruits in the region of La Ribera Alta, whose harvest is at an advanced stage, according to a first estimate of the Valencian Association of Agricultural Producers (Ava-Asaja).

This hailstorm has been a new setback for many peach, nectarine, plum and apricot growers, with severe damages to the production and leaves on the ground. The head of agricultural insurance at Ava-Asaja said that it is still early to determine the extent of the damage. In a few days, they will have more data about crop loss.

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Australia - NSW economy set feel \$1b pain in crop losses due to mouse plague

Crop losses due to the mouse damage in key grain producing regions could "easily exceed" \$1 billion for NSW alone. NSW Farmers have crunched the numbers from the devastating mouse plague that continues to ravage the state and have found potential losses for wheat are already at around \$955 million.

It comes after the NSW Farmers' survey into the mouse plague indicated that more than 40 per cent of growers would reduce the area they plant in 2021 due to the lack of baiting support at the time of sowing. Meanwhile the NSW government last week announced it had secured 10,000 litres of bromadiolone to take out the mice infesting much of NSW. In 2014 mouse plague, 6000 litres of bromadiolone was used to help end the plague.

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