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World News Summary from AgrolInsurance

December 2020



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!

India - States defect from central crop insurance program

In February 2020, the federal government of India imposed changes to the existing crop insurance program, PMFBY, intending to make it more farmer-friendly and improve its appeal to insurers. Since the announcement, the state of Gujarat has left PMFBY, adding to earlier defections by the states Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Telangana; Madhya Pradesh has remained in PMFBY and implemented a surplus-sharing model.

Gujarat provisionally left the scheme for one year due to high insurance rates quoted by insurance companies for PMFBY. The state is implementing a state-run crop insurance scheme called Mukhya Mantri Kisan Sahay Yojna, which differs from the existing PMFBY. After Gujarat tests its program for one year, the state government will judge whether to continue with their own scheme or to re-establish participation in the PMFBY based on performance.

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India - What is Jharkhand's crop relief scheme that will replace PM insurance scheme?

Jharkhand is set to replace the Prime Minister's insurance scheme for farmers with its own crop relief scheme. Launched on December 29, the scheme will take three months to come into effect. Jharkhand's Kisan Fasal Rahat Yojana is a compensation scheme aimed at providing security cover to Jharkhand farmers in case of crop damage due to natural calamity.

It will cover both land owning and landless farmers. The Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Co-operative will be the implementing agency and it will work in association with a project management unit, which will be a consultancy firm that will take care of technical requirements. Food safety, crop diversification, rapid development in agriculture and paving the way for competition, are among the aims of the scheme.

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USA - \$13 billion in direct aid for farmers included in Covid relief bill

Covid aid money will be going to agriculture in the bill signed by President. It calls for \$13 billion in direct aid to farmers with another 13 billion going to food and nutrition type programs. Of the \$13 billion going to farmers, 5 billion of the total is to go for \$20 an acre payments for row crop farmers with corn growers getting 1.8 billion, soybean farmers are scheduled to get 1.7 billion and wheat growers can expect \$890 million.

Another \$1 billion is designated for contract growers of livestock and poultry to cover up to 80% of their losses so far during the pandemic. Dairy would also see some funding under the bill. It calls for the USDA to spend \$400 million to buy milk for processing into products that can be donated to food banks and other charities. It would also make dairy producers eligible for payments up to \$470 million through a supplemental version of the Dairy Margin Coverage subsidy.

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USA - Farmers can now submit claims for off-target Dicamba soybean damage

Farmers who believe they had crops damaged from off-target dicamba from 2015 to 2020 can now submit claims. It's part of a \$400 million settlement announced last June that's designed to compensate farmers for yield losses resulting from off-target dicamba crop damage. Under the settlement, affected farmers may receive up to 100% of their yield losses caused by off-target dicamba.

That means impacted farmers can potentially recover 100 cents on the dollar of the losses that they can establish with standard farming records. Farmers are able to complete the claim process on their own; can hire an attorney of their choice; or can retain one of the plaintiffs' executive committee firms to assist with putting together the claim form and supporting documentation.

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European Commission approves €9.3 million Croatian support scheme

The European Commission has approved a €9.3 million Croatian scheme to support enterprises that operate in certain primary agricultural sectors affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. The scheme was approved under the state aid Temporary Framework. The support, which will take the form of direct grants, will among others be available to producers of apples, mandarins and potatoes in Croatia.

The measure is expected to support more than 6,500 enterprises. The aim of the scheme is to address the liquidity needs of enterprises that suffered a decrease in sales and to help them to continue their activities during and after the outbreak. The Commission found that the Croatian scheme is in line with the conditions set out in the Temporary Framework and concluded that the measure is necessary, appropriate and proportionate to remedy a serious disturbance in the economy of a member state.

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Weather-upending La Niña is a headache for farmers around the world

The natural weather phenomenon, known as the cool sister of the better-known El Niño, occurs every few years. It is characterized by cooler-than-normal waters in the Pacific Ocean, causing dry weather in some parts of the globe and heavy rainfall in others. Past La Niñas have created significant market volatility and raised prices for many foods, and the current edition is already pushing up prices of crops such as corn and reducing supplies of pineapples and mangos.

This event has the potential to last till the Northern Hemisphere spring, according to government forecasters in the U.S., Japan and Australia who monitor sea conditions. So far, dry conditions have been reported in Brazil, Argentina, and parts of the U.S., and bouts of excessive rain in Australia and parts of Southeast Asia. La Niña 2020 has evolved quicker and with stronger intensity than many leading climate models predicted.

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Japan - Ultraviolet ray machine to prevent mikan from rotting

Japanese research institute has developed a machine that uses ultraviolet rays to protect mikan - satsuma - against rotting. Researchers at the Saika Technological Institute Foundation, which produces food quality inspection equipment and devices, and other parties, including the Shizuoka prefectural government, discovered that ultraviolet ray application causes stress to the fruit, stimulating its self-defense function.

This leads to production of a sort of polyphenol known as scoparone that has antibacterial effects and stops the skin from decomposing. Saika has developed and marketed equipment to prevent mold from forming during storage and transportation of mikan. Mikan are rotated and carried on a conveyor belt in the machine for even exposure to ultraviolet rays for 20 to 25 seconds.

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