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Robert Bonnie, U.S. Department of Agriculture



Robert Bonnie is the Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation at USDA. This is his second stint at USDA, having served as Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment and as a Senior Advisor to Secretary Vilsack during the Obama Administration. Prior to returning to USDA, Bonnie taught and researched natural resource policy at Duke University. He also worked with the Bipartisan Policy Center to establish the Farm and Forest Carbon Solutions Initiative.

Bonnie has degrees in forestry and environmental management, grew up on a farm in Kentucky, and now lives with his wife in Loudoun County, Virginia.

Dr. John Newton, U.S. Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry



Dr. John Newton serves as Chief Economist for the United States Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry for Ranking Member John Boozman of Arkansas. As Chief Economist, Dr. Newton is responsible for the Committee’s economic and policy analysis and for advising the Ranking Member on emerging issues and developments within the Committee’s jurisdiction.

Dr. Newton has served agriculture for more two decades including several roles within the U.S. Department of Agriculture and as a two-time award-winning faculty member at the University of Illinois. Prior to his service with the Agriculture Committee, Dr. Newton served as the Chief Economist for the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Dr. Newton is a Kentucky native and holds two master’s degrees, a Ph.D., and received the 2021 distinguished alumni award, all from The Ohio State University. Dr. Newton, his wife, and their daughter live in Washington, DC.

Clark Ogilvie, U.S. House Agriculture Committee



Clark Ogilvie is Special Counsel on the Democratic staff of the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture. This is Ogilvie’s third return to the Committee having served from 2005—2014 and from 2018—2019. During that time, he has worked on the past three Farm Bills, the Dodd-Frank Act, and the 2008 reauthorization of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC). In addition to working on the Committee, Ogilvie served for more than two years as Chief of Staff of the CFTC and two years as General Counsel for the Farm Credit Administration.

Ogilvie has a law degree from George Washington University and a B.A. from Rhodes College.

Josh Tonsager, U.S. Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry



Josh Tonsager is Senior Professional Staff for U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry under the leadership of Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) handling commodity programs and crop insurance policy. Previously Tonsager worked for the House Agriculture Committee under Chairman then Ranking Member David Scott (D-GA); was Vice President of Policy and Communications for the National Association of Wheat Growers; and was a Legislative Assistant to former U.S. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD).

Tonsager began his career with the National Farmers Union after receiving his Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Economics and Political Science from the University of South Dakota. He comes from a family farm near Oldham, SD.

Trevor White, U.S. House Agriculture Committee



Trevor White serves as Professional Staff on the House Agriculture Committee handling the commodity policy, crop insurance, disaster aid and credit portfolio for Chairman Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson (PA-15). During the 2018 Farm Bill he was the lead negotiator for House Republicans on the provisions in Titles 1 and 11. Prior to joining the Agriculture Committee in 2017, White spent over eight years working with Combest, Sell and Associates, an agriculture policy focused lobbying firm.

White was raised on a cotton farm in New Home, TX. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Economics from Texas Tech University and a master’s degree in applied economics from Johns Hopkins University.

Cheri Bustos, AACI/Mercury



Cheri Bustos is an American journalist, healthcare executive, and politician who served as the U.S. representative from Illinois’s 17th congressional district from 2013 to 2023. A member of the Democratic Party, she is the first woman elected to Congress from her district in the northwestern part of the state, anchored by the Illinois side of the Quad Cities and partially including Peoria and Rockford. In 2019, Bustos became chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC).

Elected to the East Moline City Council in 2007, Bustos defeated Republican Party incumbent Bobby Schilling in the 2012 election and a 2014

rematch. In 2021, Bustos and Senator Dick Durbin were the only Democrats in Illinois's congressional delegation who are not from the Chicago area. On April 30, 2021, Bustos announced that she would retire at the end of the 117th U.S. Congress.

In January 2023, the Washington DC -based public affairs and lobbying firm Mercury Public Affairs announced that Bustos had joined the firm as a consultant.

Debbie Stabenow, Senator (D-MI)



“Made in Michigan” through and through, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow continues to lead on public policy and improve the lives of the people of Michigan and Americans across our country. Her leadership is characterized by an unrivaled work ethic, the ability to build bipartisan coalitions to get things done, and a commitment to public service that has set the standard for constituent service.

Throughout her years in public service, she has blazed trails and opened doors for women and girls. Among her many “firsts” – she was the first woman elected to the United States Senate from Michigan.

As the author of two landmark programs that are transforming the health of our Great Lakes, there is no greater champion for our Great Lakes, natural resources, and Michigan way of life.

Senator Stabenow has persistently focused on making things in America and bringing jobs home. Because of her leadership, Michigan is well-positioned as a global leader in the clean energy economy. She knows that we can't have a strong economy unless we make things and grow things. As Chairwoman of the powerful Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, her work continues to shape our nation's food and farm policy, impacting generations to come.

Senator Stabenow helped write the Affordable Care Act and has passed major reforms to bring down the cost of prescription drugs. Her bipartisan Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Act is transforming the way we deliver high-quality community behavioral health services in America. Because of her leadership, we are now going to be funding health care above the neck the same as health care below the neck.

From child nutrition to school-based health clinics, to children's healthcare, Senator Stabenow is also a national leader on children's health.

Rebeckah Adcock, International Fresh Produce Association



Rebeckah Freeman Adcock serves as Vice President of U.S. Government Relations for the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA). She manages a team of policy professionals representing IFPA and the fresh produce industry in Washington D.C., and around the country. Adcock has over 25 years of experience leading agriculture, environment, infrastructure, homeland security, and economic policy, including extensive regulatory, legislative, business operations, and strategic communications expertise in the private sector, non-profits, and government.

Before joining IFPA, Adcock was a senior executive at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). First, as Senior Advisor to Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, directly counseling the Secretary on policy, regulatory, and operational matters. Adcock was USDA's Regulatory Policy and Reform Officer, leading efforts to ease the burden of regulation on the private sector and ensure that American agriculture was represented in the interagency regulatory review process. Additionally, she was the federal manager of the President's Interagency Task Force on Agriculture & Rural Prosperity and Chair of USDA Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC), ensuring robust Departmental response to federal disasters and emergencies. Adcock rounded out her civil service as Administrator of Rural Development's Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS), leading the nation's largest federal loan guarantee and grant program, providing over \$2 billion in annual funding to support rural businesses and communities.

Adcock is a veteran of Capitol Hill, having served as Counsel on the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW), where she was responsible for executive nominations, chemical and science policy, endangered species, property rights, and water-related issues.

In addition to government service, Adcock has decades of association leadership experience, serving as Vice President, Government Affairs for the National Mining Association and as Senior Director in CropLife America's Government Affairs division, as well as government relations director at both the American Farm Bureau Federation in D.C. and the Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation in Louisville. In those roles, she was a recognized industry leader, including being appointed to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Pesticide Policy Dialogue Committee (PPDC), USDA's IR-4 Advisory Committee, and as chair of the stakeholder-led Pesticide Policy Coalition (PPC).

After earning her undergraduate degree in environmental resource management from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Adcock began her career as an environmental scientist, health and safety officer, and remediation site supervisor at a private consulting firm. She later earned her Juris Doctorate from the University of Kentucky College of Law in Lexington. She is a proud Kentucky native, a member of the Leadership Kentucky Class of 2000, and a member of the state's Bar Association.

Megan Dwyer, Illinois Corn



Megan Dwyer serves as the Director of Conservation and Nutrient Stewardship for Illinois Corn and is a fourth-generation farmer and certified crop advisor. Dwyer spearheads Illinois Corn's conservation and nutrient stewardship initiatives focusing on meeting the goals of the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. By working closely with other agriculture organizations, conservation groups, agency partners and policymakers, Dwyer develops and implements programs and policy initiatives designed to help Illinois corn farmers meet their nutrient loss goals and engage in the sustainability conversation.

In her work at Illinois Corn, Dwyer, has helped bring the Post Application Coverage Endorsement (PACE) to market through the 508(h) process, developed conservation focused lease addendums, and elevated Illinois Corn and the farmer's voice in various policy, agency, and media engagements. Dwyer serves on the steering committee for the AGrEE Coalition, working with a robust and diverse group of stakeholders to assist in developing innovative and scalable food and ag policies and pilot programs.

Dwyer is a 2011 graduate of Iowa State University where she received her bachelor's degree in agriculture studies with a minor in Agronomy. In 2023, she received the Illinois Farm Bureau's Excellence in Ag Award. She resides on the family farm in Northwest Illinois with her husband, Todd, and their four children.

Robbie Minnich, National Cotton Council



Robbie Minnich is the Senior Government Relations Representative for the National Cotton Council (NCC) in Washington, D.C. He has been with NCC since January 2003.

Minnich's primary responsibility is to assist in coordinating the industry's communication with Members of Congress and their staff and Administration officials. Prior to joining the National Cotton Council, Minnich worked as agricultural advisor to former U.S. Senator Tim Hutchinson (R-AR) and staffed the senator on the Senate Agriculture Committee. During his time with Senator Hutchinson, he played an integral part in crafting the 2002 Farm Bill. He has also spent time working in the office of former Congressman Robin Hayes (NC-08).

Minnich graduated from North Carolina State University with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural and Extension Education and grew up in Henrietta, North Carolina.

Jake Westlin, National Wheat Growers Association



In October 2019, Jake joined the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) as its Government Relations Representative and was promoted to Vice President of Policy and Communications in 2021.

He comes to NAWG with North Dakota experience, from interning for U.S. Senator Conrad (D-ND) and being a Legislative Correspondent and Legislative Aide to U.S. Senator Heitkamp (D-ND). Westlin brings a fundamental understanding of the Hill to NAWG. From his time at Forbes Tate Partners as a research and policy analyst, Jake has an extensive background in agriculture, public lands, as well as food and nutrition policy.

Westlin received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Dr. Justin Benavidez, U.S. House Agriculture Committee



Dr. Justin Benavidez is the Chief Economist with the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture where he works extensively with staff on issues related to the production of commodities and livestock, trade, nutrition, and other issues. Prior to his role with the Committee, Dr. Benavidez was an Extension Economist for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension where he focused on agricultural production and policy issues.

Dr. Benavidez received a bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M University and a Fellowship from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. He is a native of Tulia, Texas.

Dr. Bart Fischer, Agriculture and Food Policy Center Texas A&M University



Dr. Bart Fischer currently serves as the Co-Director of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University. He is also an AgriLife Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and as Senior Advisor for Federal Relations in the Office of the Vice Chancellor. Dr. Fischer teaches agricultural and food policy to approximately 190 undergraduate students each spring semester, and his applied research focuses on solving real-world policy problems for agricultural producers and on anticipating potential policy changes for Congress to consider.

Before joining the university in September 2019, Dr. Fischer served for more than eight years at the Committee on Agriculture in the U.S. House of Representatives, most recently as the Deputy Staff Director and Chief Economist under the leadership of Ranking Member K. Michael Conaway (TX-11). He was involved in virtually every major agricultural policy

development in Washington, D.C., during his time with the Committee, including helping craft and pass the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills.

Dr. Fischer graduated from Oklahoma State University with bachelor's degrees in Agricultural Economics and Business Administration (with a double major in Accounting and Finance). He holds a master's degree in environmental policy from Cambridge University and a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Texas A&M University.

Dr. Fischer is the fifth generation to be raised on his family's wheat, cotton, and cattle operation in Southwest Oklahoma, and he continues to be actively involved. He and his wife, Karalyn, reside in College Station, TX, with their three children.

Marcia Bunger, USDA Risk Management Agency



On November 15, 2021, Marcia Bunger was named Administrator for the Risk Management Agency. She joined USDA after serving as a County Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) for 18 years. In total, she has over 25 years of experience working for USDA in the Farm Service Agency.

In her role as County Executive Director, Bunger worked closely with Pine Ridge Tribal Government leaders and personnel to administer FSA programs on the second largest land based Indian Reservation in the U.S. She served 15 years on the South Dakota Advisory Council to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and previously held positions at Farm Credit Services of America, including Crop Insurance Specialist and Crop Insurance Officer.

Recently, Bunger founded an agriculture consulting limited liability company providing assistance to area farmers and ranchers and to work with a local crop insurance agency selling and servicing crop insurance policies. Bunger is also the owner and operator of a 2000-acre, family-owned farm. Bunger graduated cum laude and received her bachelor's degree from Augustana College. She is the first member of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community and the first woman to serve as RMA Administrator.

Delores Dean, USDA Risk Management Agency



Delores Dean currently serves as the Deputy Administrator for Insurance Services at the Risk Management Agency (RMA) where her primary task is to administer program policies and procedures related to the delivery of the Federal crop insurance program. Dean plans, develops, and manages significant aspects of the program including regional underwriting, program evaluation and maintenance, education, outreach, and stakeholder engagement. She also provides guidance and direction to ten regional offices across the country.

Prior to this role, Dean was the Associate Deputy Administrator and managed a wide variety of administrative activities on behalf of the Insurance Services Division and RMA. Dean began her Federal career in 1991 and served in various financial management roles including RMA's Budget Officer from 2007 to 2015, where she managed about \$14 billion annually.

In addition to her RMA experience, Dean participated in the President's Management Council Interagency Rotation program in 2013 where she spent time at the Office of Personnel Management supporting development of the senior executive performance management system.

She also spent seven years between 2001 and 2008 either at the USDA Farm Service Agency supporting farm programs or at the Department of State managing the departmentwide budget development system.

Dean is a native of Alexandria, Virginia and still resides there today with her family.

Richard Flournoy, USDA Risk Management Agency



As Deputy Administrator for Product Management, Richard Flournoy oversees the development and implementation of crop insurance policies. Prior to serving in these roles, he served in various capacities for the Risk Management Agency in Washington where he oversaw and coordinated day to day operations of the agency, including implementation of the 2014 Farm Bill and communication with congressional offices. He also worked in Farm Programs at the Farm Service Agency prior to joining the Risk Management Agency.

Flournoy was raised on a cotton, peanut, corn, and tree farm in Camilla, Georgia. He received an undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia, a law degree from Mercer University, and a Master of Laws in Food and Agricultural Law from the University of Arkansas.

Heather Manzano, USDA Risk Management Agency



Heather Manzano is the Deputy Administrator for Compliance with the Risk Management Agency, located in Washington, D.C. She is also currently the Acting Chief of Staff for the Office of the Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation.

Manzano has served in several different capacities within the Risk Management Agency including Civil Rights Compliance Officer, Associate Deputy Administrator for Insurance Services, and Director for the Special Investigations Branch.

In 2014, she was selected to the position of Deputy Administrator for Compliance. She also served briefly as Acting Administrator for the Risk Management Agency in

2017.

Under Manzano's leadership, Compliance developed a new review and sampling methodology for improper payments which resulted in a sharp decline in the agency's improper payment rate. She also worked with a consultant to redesign Compliance's performance reviews of the AIPs to ensure the integrity and accountability of our industry partners.

Manzano's background includes a bachelor's degree from The George Washington University with a major in International Economics and a minor in Spanish.

Julian Ledford, Intertribal Agriculture Council

Julian grew up on the Qualla Boundary in Cherokee, NC, and later had a career in the United States Air Force. Ledford is a proud member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and currently resides with his family in Denver, CO. Ledford's diverse background brings a wealth of experience to the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC). Ledford holds degrees from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and Murray State University. With a solid military background and vast experience in project/personnel management, he adds valuable leadership, discipline, and strategic thinking to IAC's Regenerative Economies Team.

In his current role with IAC, Ledford leads the Building Resiliency project in partnership with USDA. The project's primary objective is to enhance tribal diversity and representation in the sectors of crop insurance and crop adjusting. Ledford is committed to actively contributing to the success of producers throughout Indian Country, assuming a crucial role in their respective industries. With a genuine passion for supporting Native communities and the agricultural industry, Ledford is dedicated to forging strong relationships, bridging the gap, and providing support for all producers.

David Wasserman, The Cook Political Report



David Wasserman is Senior Editor, U.S. House of Representatives for The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter, where he is responsible for analyzing U.S. House Races and is recognized as one of the nation's top election forecasters. Founded in 1984, The Cook Political Report provides analyses of Presidential, U.S. Senate, House, and gubernatorial races. The New York Times has called the Report "a newsletter both parties regard as authoritative."

In 2016, Wasserman drew praise for his accurate pre-election analysis, including his piece "How Trump Could Win the White House While Losing the Popular Vote," written two months before Election Day. Chuck Todd, host of NBC's Meet the Press, recently called him "pretty much the only person you need to follow on Election Night."

Wasserman is a contributor to NBC News and his election commentary has been cited in numerous top publications including Politico, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, and RealClearPolitics. He has served as an analyst for the NBC News Election Night Decision Desk since 2008, and has appeared on C-SPAN, CNN, Fox News and NPR.

In the spring of 2019, Wasserman was named a Pritzker Fellow at the University of Chicago's Institute of Politics, where he led a seminar entitled, "Mapping Our Future: Forecasting Elections & Redistricting 2021." A frequent speaker and guest lecturer, he has shared his insights into the latest political trends with audiences at Harvard's Institute of Politics, the Dole Institute of Politics, and Georgetown's Government Affairs Institute.

In 2018, his groundbreaking interactive collaboration with FiveThirtyEight, "Atlas of Redistricting" took top prize for News Data "App of the Year" at the Global Editors Network's Data Journalism Awards. An enthusiast for data and maps, Wasserman served as a contributing writer for both the 2016 and 2014 editions of the Almanac of American Politics. In 2014, Twitter awarded him "Best of Twitter" honors for his real-time election coverage.

Prior to joining The Cook Political Report in June 2007, Wasserman served for three years as House Editor of Sabato's Crystal Ball, a widely respected political analysis newsletter and website founded by Prof. Larry J. Sabato, Director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics. In that role, David led the publication to correctly predict Democrats would score a gain of 29 House seats in November 2006.

A native of New Jersey, Wasserman holds a B.A. in Government with distinction from the University of Virginia and was awarded the 2006 Emmerich-Wright Outstanding Thesis prize for his study of congressional redistricting standards.

Rich Lerner, The Golf Channel



For the better part of the last two decades Rich Lerner has been a mainstay at the Golf Channel, serving as anchor, reporter, and essayist for *Golf Central*. Lerner also serves as the lead anchor for Golf Channel's *Live From* shows at the game's biggest events like The Masters and U.S. Open, writing and delivering the opening teases in addition to his closing essays. He handles play-by-play for the PGA TOUR, traveling from Pebble Beach to Kuala Lumpur and parts in between. In February 2018, Lerner, worked as a feature story reporter on NBC's coverage of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeong Chang, South Korea. Lerner is a recipient of the prestigious Lew Klein Award for Excellence in Broadcasting from his alma mater, Temple University. He also anchors the network's coverage of the *Drive, Chip and Putt Championship National Finals* from Augusta National Golf Club.

For almost 20 years, through their Elijah Ross Foundation, Rich and his wife, Robin hosted a charity pro-am golf tournament in Orlando, *The December Classic*, benefitting the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies.

In addition to his responsibilities at Golf Channel, Lerner enjoys sharing his insider knowledge, passionate opinions and humorous stories at corporate dinners, golf outings and charity events throughout the country. Lerner resides in Wilton, CT with his wife Robin.

2024 Industry Award Recipients

Ron Rutledge – Lifetime Achievement Award

The lasting impact Ron Rutledge has made on the crop insurance industry will be felt for many years to come through his actions and through those he has mentored. After a 40-year-career at Farmers Mutual Hail, the “retiree” is still spending his days on Capitol Hill fighting for crop insurance as Congress reviews a new Farm Bill. From testifying to the Senate while serving as Chairman of CIRB in 2017, to walking with CIRB Emerging Leaders as they meet with members of congress each spring, he continues to champion the safety net of America’s farmers.

During his four decades at FMH, Ron held multiple leadership roles. In his tenure as president and CEO (2010-2021), he grew the company’s footprint from regional to national through the acquisition of John Deere Insurance Company, and he led the company to achieving its first billion-dollar premium milestone. He helped to usher in new technologies, including using precision data for crop insurance, as well as managed the unprecedented change in the workplace during the COVID pandemic.

Ultimately, Ron’s easy-going personality makes him approachable for many folks across the industry, and his impact can be felt in the people he worked alongside and mentored, especially at FMH. Those that know him can attest to his friendliness, knowledge, and passion for crop insurance.

Ron has served or currently serves on:

- The Board of Directors for National Crop Insurance Services (NCIS), as well as various committees throughout the years
- The Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Crop Insurance and Reinsurance Bureau (CIRB),
- The Board of Directors for the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC)
- The Board of Directors for the Iowa Insurance Institute

Other notable achievements:

- During his term as Chairman of the Board for CIRB in 2017, he testified before the Senate Agriculture Committee on behalf of the crop insurance industry.
- During his tenure as president at FMH, Ron doubled the company’s premium from \$500 million to \$1 billion, as well as grew FMH to serve a national footprint.
- Ron has served on the FMH Board of Directors for 30 years.

In addition to Ron’s service to the industry, he has used his leadership positions to bring positive change to others. From shaving his head to raise funds for childhood cancer research, to increasing donations to local food banks during the pandemic, Ron makes sure a culture of giving and caring for the community is felt at FMH and beyond.

Lisa Haag, Rural Community Insurance Services – Friend of the Industry Award

Lisa Haag has worked in support of and for the betterment of agriculture and the crop insurance industry her entire career. Over the years, her tireless dedication and leadership, along with her collaborative relationships with underwriters, agents, and regulators, have provided the industry with the steady leadership and guidance that has positively impacted crop insurance and the growers who depend on it each year.

Lisa joined RCIS in 2000 and is a valued member of the RCIS Leadership Team and the Zurich North America Compliance Leadership Team. Lisa's extensive day-to-day experience working within the Approved Insurance Provider (AIP) environment includes oversight of the following:

- Advisory functions to Identify, Communicate, Advise and Monitor Implementation of Federal Crop Insurance,
- Assurance that customers are receiving products and services they expect,
- Guidance on Federal Crop Insurance Program policy and procedures for all departments, and
- Staff who are single points of contacts with NCIS and RMA for interpretation and comments to draft policy and procedure.

Lisa is not the type of person who seeks out recognition or credit for a job well done. Lisa rolls up her sleeves and goes to work to make sure the crop insurance program has strong policy and procedures in place that will work with the system in place to process and manage the business. She has an amazing ability to bring all perspectives together – AIP, agent, farmer, Risk Management Agency (RMA) – to outline realistic policy and procedures that will work. Lisa has participated at an industry level in many RMA meetings and sat in on many NCIS committee meetings where she was asked to provide input and feedback. She's had substantial involvement and impact within industry-level work groups, including the last Standard Reinsurance Agreement negotiation and the implementation of the Combo plans of insurance in 2009-2011.

Lisa is a powerful advocate for program integrity, working closely with both legal and regulatory affairs team members and RMA to strengthen program controls and protect the program from waste and abuse. Her historical and institutional knowledge enables her to identify seemingly minor issues that could have major consequences for the program.

She has helped develop the concept of written agreement actuarial data masters, provided ideas and input on crop insurance legislation concepts and text, and endless numbers of provisions and procedures. Lisa's opinion is sought out from both inside and outside of RCIS. She is a trusted resource who has genuine concern for all involved in an efficient and effective crop insurance program and procedures.

Jamie Cortes, Marsh McLennan – Outstanding Achievement Award

Jaime Cortes, Marsh McLennan, exhibits exemplary service and outreach to Native American agriculture producers. Jamie has represented his agency and the industry well, providing Native American agriculture producer education on Rainfall Index/Pasture Rangeland and Forage, livestock programs and Whole-Farm Revenue Protection.

While relatively new to crop insurance, Jaime focuses his time educating producers on the benefits provided by the Rainfall Index and livestock programs. Jaime recognized that many tribe members throughout the Pacific Northwest were raising cattle and had enormous risks that could be managed utilizing PRF and livestock programs. He took it upon himself to attend a Northwest Intertribal Council (IAC) meeting to better understand the risks Native agriculture producers face.

Following this meeting, Jamie was able to meet with several members of the Northwest IAC to provide them with information about the risk management solutions available to producers and ranchers. Following the meeting, one attendee remarked that he was the first person in 20 years to discuss crop insurance with this group. That meeting sparked many additional meetings with several other tribe councils and ag groups throughout the Pacific Northwest to discuss the benefits of utilizing crop insurance to manage risk. Jaime's focus is to educate producers and ranchers on the ability to utilize tools to cover production cost with the various MPCCI programs available.

Jaime efforts are recognized by others within industry. After leading a presentation on Livestock Disaster Resources at the 2022 IAC Annual Conference, he has been asked to return to the 2023 IAC Annual Conference as a panelist discussing crop insurance. Jamie has also submitted a proposal to lead another presentation on LRP, PRF, Weaned Calf and WFRP/Micro Farm at the conference, continuing his goal to educate Native agriculture producers on the tools available to them.

Jaime has demonstrated his commitment to outreach and education to these underserved producers and ranchers. His goal is to provide information to producers/ranchers, so they can utilize all the risk management tools available to protect their farms and ranches.

Hartwell Huddleston, Delta Crop Insurance – Outstanding Achievement Award

Hartwell Huddleston is a crop insurance agent and the president of Delta Crop Insurance. Over the years, he and his team have made themselves an invaluable resource for the African American farming community in their area, and to the broader communities surrounding the towns of Rolling Fork and Greenville in Mississippi. Their hard work and tireless outreach are more than deserving of recognition by the NCIS.

The team at Delta Crop Insurance provides exemplary service to every one of their producers, treating each farmer the same as any other including those with limited resources or a lack of prior knowledge about crop insurance. They always make themselves available to each of their clients and are a constant source of education and service for growers in the area. Each year, they are careful to ensure that all their policyholders are equipped with the

knowledge and resources they need to navigate planting season and the acreage reporting and production reporting deadlines.

Even in the face of tragedy, Mr. Huddleston and his employees act as stalwart servants of their farmers and of their community. In March of 2023, Rolling Fork was devastated by a catastrophic tornado. Though the Delta Crop Insurance office was destroyed, the team continued to fight for their policyholders every single day. Battling damaged infrastructure and communication challenges, they managed to reach out to all their growers—especially those with limited resources, who were most vulnerable to the effects of the disaster—to make sure their needs were met, their claims were worked, and they had what they needed to keep farming.

Darrell Tennie, Agribusiness Alliance CIR Group Inc. – Outstanding Achievement Award

Darrell Tennie and the staff at Agribusiness Alliance CIR Group Inc. (AGBI) out of Knightdale, North Carolina, have been selling crop insurance since 2014. They prospect new business by spending a lot of time going out and visiting farmers in the field, but also by partnering with several outreach programs. Some of the outreach programs they collaborate with are Community Based Organizations and 1890 Land Grant Institutions. They also hold conferences around the country educating their farmers with Agribusiness Development Workshops.

These development workshops are very intuitive and include Taxation, Entity Structure, Financial Statements and Understanding Crop Insurance. This level of service has led to AGBI growing their book to \$2.04 million in premium with 98% of their policyholders being socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers. In addition to North Carolina, Agribusiness Alliance CIR Group Inc has growers in Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina and specialize in Whole Farm Revenue Protection.