

 **NAU Country.**
A QBE Insurance Company

2024

Country Times



A YEAR IN REVIEW!



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A Word from President Jim Korin

As we come into harvest season, we have certainly seen volatility across the United States regarding growing season conditions this year. We are so glad to be a strong player in helping the American farmer secure their future in times of uncertainty. As the second largest writer of crop insurance across the United States, I feel it is our obligation to provide leadership and support to the program from an industry perspective. It is in this light that we have tried to form a coalition of Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs), agents, and industry partners to advance what is needed for the long-term success of the crop insurance program.

At NAU Country, we believe in the original three-legged stool concept the program originated from:

1. Certainly, the most important part of the stool is the survival and success of the **American farmer** as they feed, clothe, and provide fuel for the world. This part of the stool provides the need and foundation for the program overall.
2. The second part of the stool is the **Federal government**. This includes the delivery side and, importantly, the taxpayer who assists in the program's costs to assure its sustainability. On the delivery side, the obligation is to provide adequate ratings and policy terms and to ensure that oversight is sufficient to adequately oversee the spending of taxpayer dollars.
3. The final part of the stool is the **private sector** delivery. Here, in our culture, we believe this includes the companies and the many great agents across the country who sit across the table from our farmers and help them consider the complex maze of options available under the program. As our partners, we believe in working with our agents to be sure the program works for all.

I am proud to say that we have spent a great deal of time working on all three parts of the stool this year.

1. Within the Farm Bill framework, we have invested in additional lobbying support and have worked with our agents, AACI (American Association of Crop Insurers), and CIPA (Crop Insurance Professionals Association) to support changes for delivery costs and specialty crop A&O (Administrative and Operating expenses) to fix major problems in the reimbursements received for program delivery. We have worked on additional coverage options and supported reforms to coverage that our farmers need.
2. Outside of the Farm Bill, I am excited to say that our efforts to expand coverage through the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) endorsement is continuing to pay off. ECO is a higher-level coverage we brought to the table through the 508(h) process. The board recently approved an increase in the premium support for this product in 2025. This change will expand farmers' options for higher-level coverage and provide better protection while supporting a lesser need for Ad Hoc taxpayer spending. It allows the private sector to expand our role in assisting farmers with risk management!
3. We have worked with NCIS (National Crop Insurance Services) to challenge regional product provisions and ratings and suggested important changes to be sure crop insurance and livestock coverage remains available to all farmers in every state. Program sustainability and availability touch every leg of the stool above.

We recently returned from our National Agent Advisory meeting where we discussed all these issues and many more. I appreciate the feedback and direction we receive from that group and all our important partners. We welcome comments that you may have, as it helps us to be an even better leader in this important program.

Moving into the fall, let's pray for good weather and strong international support for all of our country's farmer-produced products. Thanks for everything you do as employees and agent partners and for strengthening the three-legged stool of crop insurance!



A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF OPERATION OFFICER MICK DEAL

Strengthening Foundations for Success!

As many of you are aware, my roots in the crop insurance industry run deep. Over the years, I've witnessed its evolution—changing products, new regulations, and industry shifts. Yet, my unwavering passion lies in fostering a culture where people thrive. With the right team and culture, success and service naturally follow suit.

Recent years have brought significant changes. NAU Country has prioritized enhancing communication, restructuring teams, and preparing robust frameworks to support our expanding business needs, innovative changes, and partnerships with agents, the Federal Government, and American farmers. It's an ambitious endeavor, but it all begins with a solid foundation, exceptional people, and a sound strategy. These remain our focal points.

Since assuming the role of Chief Operation Officer in March 2022, building a strong foundation has been paramount. Our operations team, comprising leaders from Claims, Compliance, Underwriting, Farm Services, IT, Communications, and Account Relations, has worked tirelessly to align strategies, enhance transparency, and promote collaboration. Daily morning meetings and regular touchpoints have uncovered needed process improvements, sparked new ideas, and cultivated a team of diverse thinkers united in serving our agent partners and farmers.

Focusing on team development and structure, particularly in our claims department, has been a priority. Senior Vice President of Claims Mark Mossman and his team have worked very closely with our People Partner team to implement some remarkable changes. We've dedicated substantial effort to bolster leadership, prioritize mental health awareness, deepen regulatory knowledge, and ensure seamless service delivery, which is critical as we scale our operations without compromising service to the American farmer. We will continue to evaluate additional teams to see if similar changes can benefit them in the future.

Streamlining initiatives and encouraging open communication have been pivotal in our success. Each team member's contributions and experience have enriched our strategy and fortified relationships with our Branch Managers and regional offices, enhancing our ability to adapt to industry changes and emerging technologies.

Looking ahead, amidst evolving legislation, advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), and shifting climates, NAU Country is committed to standing firm on our foundation of support. We're honored to serve you and grateful for your continued trust and partnership.

FARM BILL UPDATE

from Matt Schertz

The U.S. Congress departed Washington, D.C., for the August recess last week. When they return in September, most of the work will focus on funding the government past September 30, 2024. One of the lingering questions is whether Congress will also be able to wrap up the new Farm Bill by the end of the year. Only two Farm Bills (1996 and 2008) were signed into law during a presidential election year over the past 50 years. But, despite the long odds, most of our champions in Congress seem committed to getting a Farm Bill done this year.

Importantly, the Agriculture Committees seem to be well aware of the need to improve the farm safety net, particularly Title 1 (Commodities). NAU Country has been actively involved in helping craft solutions that will benefit producers across the country. For example, the House Agriculture Committee successfully reported its bill - the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024 - out of committee in May with the support of four (4) Democrats. The bill would improve the Agriculture

Risk Coverage (ARC) program and significantly raise reference prices in the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. While the message to lawmakers is typically that they should simply do no harm to crop insurance, the House bill proposed to make about \$3.5 billion in improvements, including increasing area-wide coverage levels and premium support along with addressing long-standing concerns with A&O (Administrative and Operating expenses). While the Senate has yet to release text, both the majority and minority have released their own Farm Bill frameworks, albeit with varying levels of investment in the farm safety net.

While the groundwork is being laid to finish the Farm Bill this year, there are certainly headwinds. Of course, the presidential election is dominating the airways at the moment and will continue to do so through early November. On the Farm Bill front, Congress continues to grapple with whether to restrict the USDA Secretary's discretionary use of the Commodity Credit Corporation, whether to bring the Inflation Reduction Act's climate-smart



funding inside of the Farm Bill, and whether to restrict the Secretary's ability to raise SNAP (food stamp) benefits going forward absent Congressional input. While these are all big policy questions, they also have a significant bearing on the cost of the impending Farm Bill.

Between collapsing prices, sticky input costs, and ongoing natural disasters, there is a clear need for improvements to the farm safety net. Given the next Congress will face a number of demands - from raising the debt ceiling to dealing with the expiration of many of the major provisions from the 2017 Trump tax cuts - the time for getting a new Farm Bill finished is now. To that end, NAU Country will continue to focus on working with our Senators and Representatives to get a new Farm Bill wrapped up before the end of the year.

NAU Country is proud to represent the crop insurance industry on such critical issues facing the American farmer.

About Matt Schertz

Matt Schertz joined the NAU Country team in 2023. He founded Schertz Strategies with the vision of providing clients with strategic and tactical guidance on critical issues confronting farmers, ranchers, and the agricultural industry.

Previously, Matt served as the Staff Director of the House Committee on Agriculture under the leadership of Chairman Rep. K. Michael Conaway (R-TX). He also served as Senior Professional Staff responsible for farm policy and crop insurance for then-Chairman Rep. Frank D. Lucas (R-OK), as well as Staff Director for the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management under then-Chairman Rep. K. Michael Conaway (R-TX). Matt has worked on various legislation affecting U.S. agriculture, most notably the 2002, 2008, 2014, and 2018 Farm Bills. Matt is a native of Robstown, TX, and holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture and applied economics from Texas Tech University. He resides in Arlington, VA, with his wife Tamara, son Samuel and daughter Lydia.





**SEEDING
THE FUTURE**

AACI'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The American Association of Crop Insurers (AACI) serves as a vital voice for the private sector crop insurance industry in the United States, actively engaging with federal legislative, regulatory, and policy matters. AACI uniquely represents all facets of the industry involved in marketing and servicing the federal crop insurance program, offering a diverse perspective that informs and influences policy outcomes effectively.

In 2021, AACI introduced "Seeding the Future," a comprehensive leadership development initiative aimed at identifying and nurturing the next generation of leaders within the crop insurance sector. This program is designed to equip participants with the necessary tools and resources to advocate for crop insurance on behalf of AACI and the industry at large, both nationally and in Washington, D.C. It emphasizes the cultivation of critical relationships and the establishment of networks with policy influencers.

Spanning a two-year period, the program covers essential topics, including the history and mission of AACI, political and policy dynamics, communication strategies, leadership skills, and the intricacies of Political Action Committees (PACs), grassroots efforts, and policymaking.

NAU Country proudly sponsored VP of Regional Marketing Rebecca Hudson to participate in the program during the first session, while SVP of Marketing Communications and Account Relations Hope Floberg is in her final year of completion. Both have benefited significantly from the program, enhancing their understanding of crop insurance advocacy and honing their effectiveness in their respective roles.

Participants in the program have the unique opportunity to engage directly with members of the Agriculture Committee, hold discussions with USDA representatives, and conduct small group meetings with political leaders on Capitol Hill.

Reflecting on her experience, Hope Floberg remarked, "This opportunity, although initially outside my comfort zone, has been transformative for my career. It has provided me with a comprehensive understanding of how various aspects of crop insurance intersect and highlighted the extensive deliberation and dedication involved in shaping the Farm Bill. I am grateful to be part of a company that values my skills and affords me the privilege to participate in such a developmental program."

AACI President Scott Graves oversees the program alongside Matt Valesko and Brittney Matousek, who play instrumental roles in providing a holistic perspective on the importance of advocating for crop insurance.

Through "Seeding the Future," AACI continues to foster a set of informed and influential leaders poised to shape the future of crop insurance policy and advocacy.



<https://www.aacinsurers.com>
You can help by supporting the AACI and the AACI Political Action Fund.

Leading Through Service!

A REFLECTION FROM HOPE FLOBERG

It's truly humbling to find myself featured in the pages of Country Times, and I'm excited to introduce myself to those who may not know me. I'm Hope Floberg, a relatively new addition to the Executive Team at NAU Country. My primary roles in life include being a devoted wife to Chris Floberg and a proud mother to four amazing children, whose ages range from 7 to 20. My journey with NAU Country began in May 2001, starting as a receptionist. Since then, I've had the privilege of transitioning through various roles within IT and Promotional Marketing, culminating in my current position as Senior Vice President of Marketing Communications and Account Relations since April 2022.

In my current role, I oversee several small yet dynamic teams: Account Relations, Print Center, Promotional Marketing, National Communications, and IT Training Resources. Each team is dedicated to delivering exceptional customer service and consistently refining our processes and offerings.

I'm thrilled to highlight some recent enhancements that aim to elevate your experience with NAU Country:

Proactive Engagement: Under the leadership of Andrea Nyseth, our Account Relations team has implemented new system functionalities to proactively manage expiring licenses, trainings, and missing documents. Our goal is to ensure smooth processing within our systems and to prevent any oversights by reaching out to you ahead of time.

Extended Service Hours: Led by Troy Krauth, our Print Center team has introduced an evening shift to enhance our ability to promptly deliver underwriting documents and map books. We provide regular updates to our Regional Branch Managers and Marketing Representatives to keep them informed of the status of their print jobs and any potential delays.

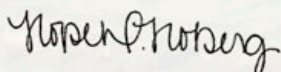
Streamlined Communication: The National Communications team, led by Katherine Ferrier, is dedicated to refining our communication strategies. We're consolidating similar emails, highlighting the content in RMA bulletins, and striving for clarity and conciseness in all our communications to better serve your needs.

Enhanced Tools for Farmers: Looking ahead to 2025, we're expanding our Risk Management booklets to new states. These booklets are invaluable resources for farmers, offering tools to simplify their crop insurance experience and providing crucial planting and reporting dates.

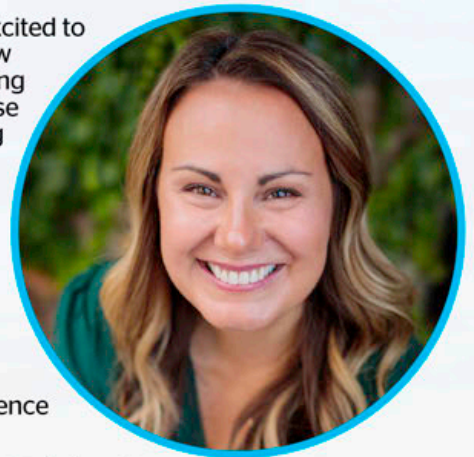
Customized Marketing Solutions: The Graphics team, led by Shane Kvalevog, is thrilled to offer customized co-branded ads and brochures. This personalized touch has become increasingly popular among agents who appreciate the opportunity to showcase their branding to their farmers.

Your feedback is invaluable to us, and we're committed to continuously improving our services. Please don't hesitate to reach out at any time with your thoughts or needs. I look forward to connecting with you and discussing how NAU Country can continue to support your business.

Warm regards,



Hope Floberg
Senior Vice President, Marketing Communications and Account Relations





EXPLORING AI UTILIZATION: Balancing Priority and Regulatory Risk

Hello! I'm Brock Maus, Senior Vice President of Information Technology at NAU Country. Since joining the company in 2008, I've had the honor of witnessing and contributing to the remarkable growth and success of our IT department and the company as a whole. As we navigate through 2024, the topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its potential impact on the agriculture industry has become increasingly prominent. I'd like to share some insights on this exciting subject.



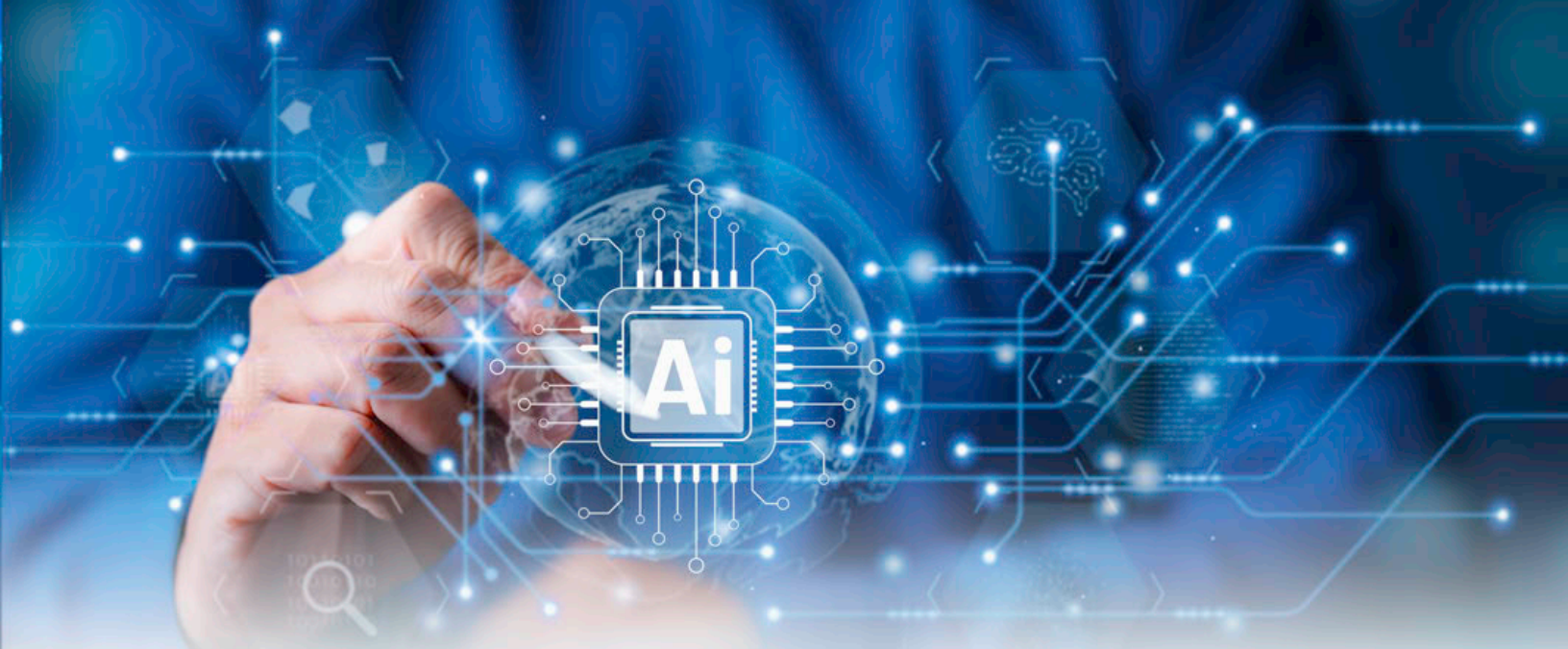
INTRODUCTION

AI has emerged as a transformative force across industries, revolutionizing the way organizations operate. Our IT team understands the immense potential of AI and its impact on business processes. We'll dive into how our team is strategically exploring AI utilization while maintaining a delicate balance between priority and regulatory risk.

THE AI LANDSCAPE

AI encompasses a wide spectrum of technologies, from machine learning algorithms to natural language processing and computer vision. Its applications span from automating routine tasks to summarizing information and optimizing supply chains. As we embark on this journey, it's crucial to recognize the following key aspects:

- **Strategic Alignment:** Our AI initiatives must align with the organization's overall strategy. We need to identify areas where AI can drive value, enhance efficiency, and improve decision-making.
- **Risk Assessment:** While AI promises significant benefits, it also introduces risks. These include biases in algorithms, data privacy concerns, and unintended consequences. Our team is committed to rigorous risk assessment and mitigation.



INTERNAL USE CASES

Our initial focus lies on internal use cases, leveraging some specific claims data, but mostly public information and data provided by the Risk Management Agency (RMA). Let's explore some examples:

- **Claims Efficiency:**
 - We currently utilize AI and machine learning to assist with data extraction and data input. Our staff has the capability to utilize our models to extract, review, and import data directly into our claims adjusting software, EASYjuster Pro®, rather than having to key in field data by hand.
 - We have a number of licensed pilots within NAU Country that fly and utilize drones to help survey fields for damage and can accurately measure areas of interest. Additionally, drones are being used with one of our partners to assist us with inspections, particularly with nursery operations, where we can count trees, provide relative tree height, age, leaf density, etc., while minimizing contamination and manual efforts.
- **Staff Resource:**
 - Evaluating opportunities to help summarize and find specific crop insurance information, including details from provisions, the document standards handbooks, crop insurance handbooks, and even loss adjustment handbooks. AI has the potential to streamline and summarize extensive documentation, saving time and improving efficiency.

SECURITY AND PRIVACY MEASURES

As we embrace AI, security and privacy remain paramount:

- **Data Governance:** We establish robust data governance frameworks, ensuring data quality, access controls, and compliance with regulations like NY DFS (New York Department of Financial Services) and CCPA (California Consumer Privacy Act).
- **Model Explainability:** Our AI models should be interpretable. We need to understand how decisions are made to build trust with stakeholders.
- **Ethical AI:** Bias detection and fairness assessments are integral. We actively address biases and promote fairness in our algorithms.

CONCLUSION

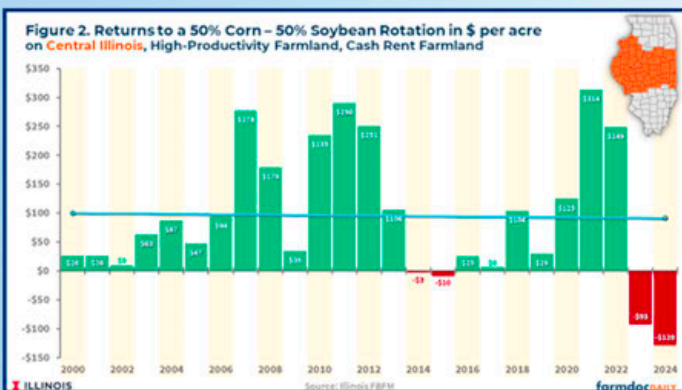
Our journey into AI utilization is exciting yet challenging. By prioritizing strategic alignment, assessing risks, and implementing robust security measures, we pave the way for responsible AI adoption. As an organization, we're committed to harnessing AI's power while safeguarding our stakeholders' interests.

The path to AI excellence is not a sprint. It's a thoughtful marathon where every step counts.

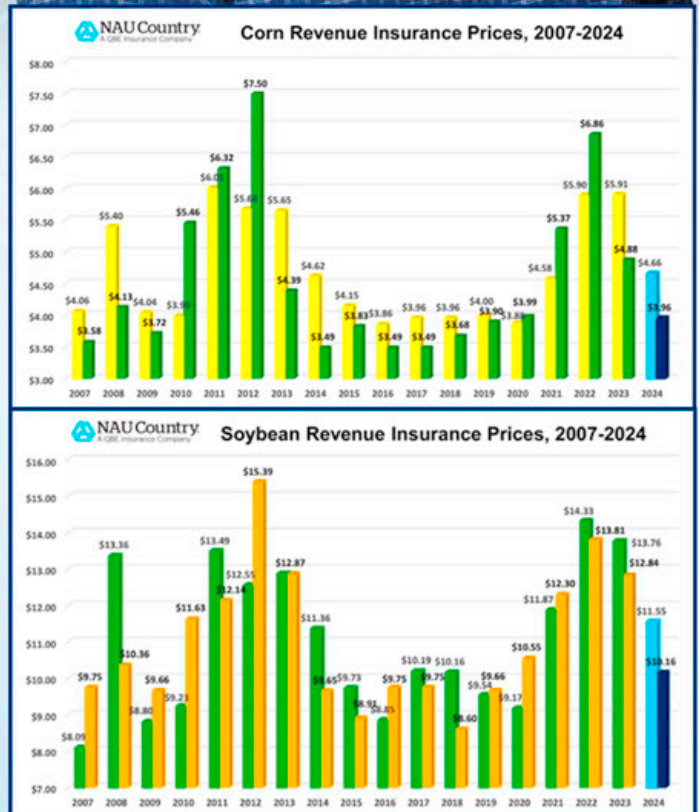
Strategize for '25!



Even though 2024 has been a decent weather year for producers across the majority of the U.S., it has probably been one of the most stressful years in recent history. Farmdoc Daily shared a net return table the last week of July 2024, showing why grower returns in central Illinois (and much of the country) are expected to be the lowest in many years. Hindsight is 20/20, as they say, but hopefully, those producers that worked with NAU Country and our risk managers/agents knew about the tools that are available to help manage against revenue risks, tools like Margin Protection (MP), the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO), and the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO).



Source: Schnitkey, G., B. Zwilling, N. Paulson, C. Zulauf, B. Rhea and J. Baltz. "Increasing Pessimism About 2024 and 2025 Corn and Soybean Returns." farmdoc daily (14):141, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, July 30, 2024. <https://farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/2024/07/increasing-pessimism-about-2024-and-2025-corn-and-soybean-returns.html>



Last winter, I often showed these charts, comparing price action this decade to the price action a decade ago. Following the historically steep prices in 2012, demand sharply reduced, and acres/production increased. We expected and have received the same situation following 2022's high prices.

As risk managers, it's not too soon to begin working with producers to help them put together a plan for 2025. We don't know if we'll get a new Farm Bill, which could increase coverage premium support for SCO, but we already know that premium support for ECO is increasing to 65% (outside of the Farm Bill). One thing that began a year ago was the increase in importance of the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC-CO) program. That's because ARC-CO uses a 5-year Olympic average price. For many crops, ARC-CO will hold a substantial price advantage over SCO for 2025, and since both have a trigger at 86%, we'll want to show that to producers.

To help with this, NAU Country will have a new tool to compare SCO and ARC-CO side-by-side. Here's a screenshot of that tool. I've always found that a picture is the best way to make a point, and this tool should help.

Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) vs Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC-CO)				NAU Country	
<small>Supplemental Coverage Option is a crop insurance program based on planted acres. SCO is a county-based coverage and uses yields from the RMA & crop insurance prices. SCO protection starts at 86% and covers the band down to the producer's RP coverage. Producers that purchase SCO coverage CANNOT enroll in the ARC program with FSA.</small>					
<small>Agriculture Risk Coverage is a government program available thru the FSA office. ARC is a free program that can be chosen instead of PLC (Price Loss Coverage). ARC-CO is a county-based coverage that uses 5-year Olympic average yields and 5-year Olympic average prices to determine revenue triggers. ARC-CO payments are based on 85% of Base Acres and not on what the producers plants that year. Payments are limited to 10% of the Benchmark Revenue (determined in section 1).</small>					
2025 Corn			Morgan County, Illinois		
SCO Coverage Calculation			ARC-CO Coverage Calculation		
Base Price	\$4.46	Expected Crop Value	\$1,026	5 Year Olympic Avg Price	\$5.06
Harvest Price	\$4.00	SCO Coverage	10%	5 Year Olympic County Yield	224.0
Higher Price x APH	230.0	Preliminary SCO \$ Protection	\$102.58	Benchmark Revenue	\$1,133
Expected Crop Value	\$1,026	Coverage Percentage	100%	ARC-CO % Trigger	90%
SCO Coverage Trigger	90%	Selected SCO \$ Protection	\$102.58	ARC-CO Guarantee	\$1,020
minus RP Coverage	80%	PLANTED Acres	1000	BASE Acres	900
equals SCO Coverage	10%			times 85% eligible	x 85%
				Payable Base Acres	765
SCO Loss Calculation			ARC Loss Calculation		
EXPECTED County Yield	220.8	Final County Revenue	\$880	Market Year Average (MYA) Price	\$4.00
x Higher Price	\$4.46	/ Expected County Revenue	\$985	FINAL County Yield	220.0
Expected County Revenue	\$985	% Expected Revenue Realized	89.4%	Final County Revenue	\$880
FINAL County Yield	220.0	(Cannot be below RP coverage level)			
times Harvest Price	\$4.00	% Trigger - % Expected	0.60%		
equals Final County Revenue	\$880	equals SCO Indemnity Factor	6.0%		
SCO Indemnity Calculation			ARC Indemnity Calculation		
SCO \$ Protection	\$102.58	SCO Indemnity	\$6.15	ARC-CO Guarantee	\$1,020
times SCO Indemnity Factor	6.0%	times Planted Acres	1000	minus Final County Revenue	\$880
equals SCO Indemnity	\$6.15	Total SCO Payment	\$6,150	equals ARC Payment	\$113
		SCO Premium	\$0	(Max Payment 10% of Benchmark Revenue)	
		Net SCO Payment after Premium	\$6,150	ARC Payment	\$113
				times 85% Base Acres	765
				Total ARC Payment	\$86,445

You can see in the chart to the right, my thoughts to Strategize for '25! For several years, we have focused on using crop insurance tools to lock in profit and marketing when desired profit opportunities were available. For 2025 and beyond, it sure looks like government programs are going to be important in providing that third leg of the stool for producers. It's our opportunity to really earn the trust of our producers in helping them Strategize for '25!

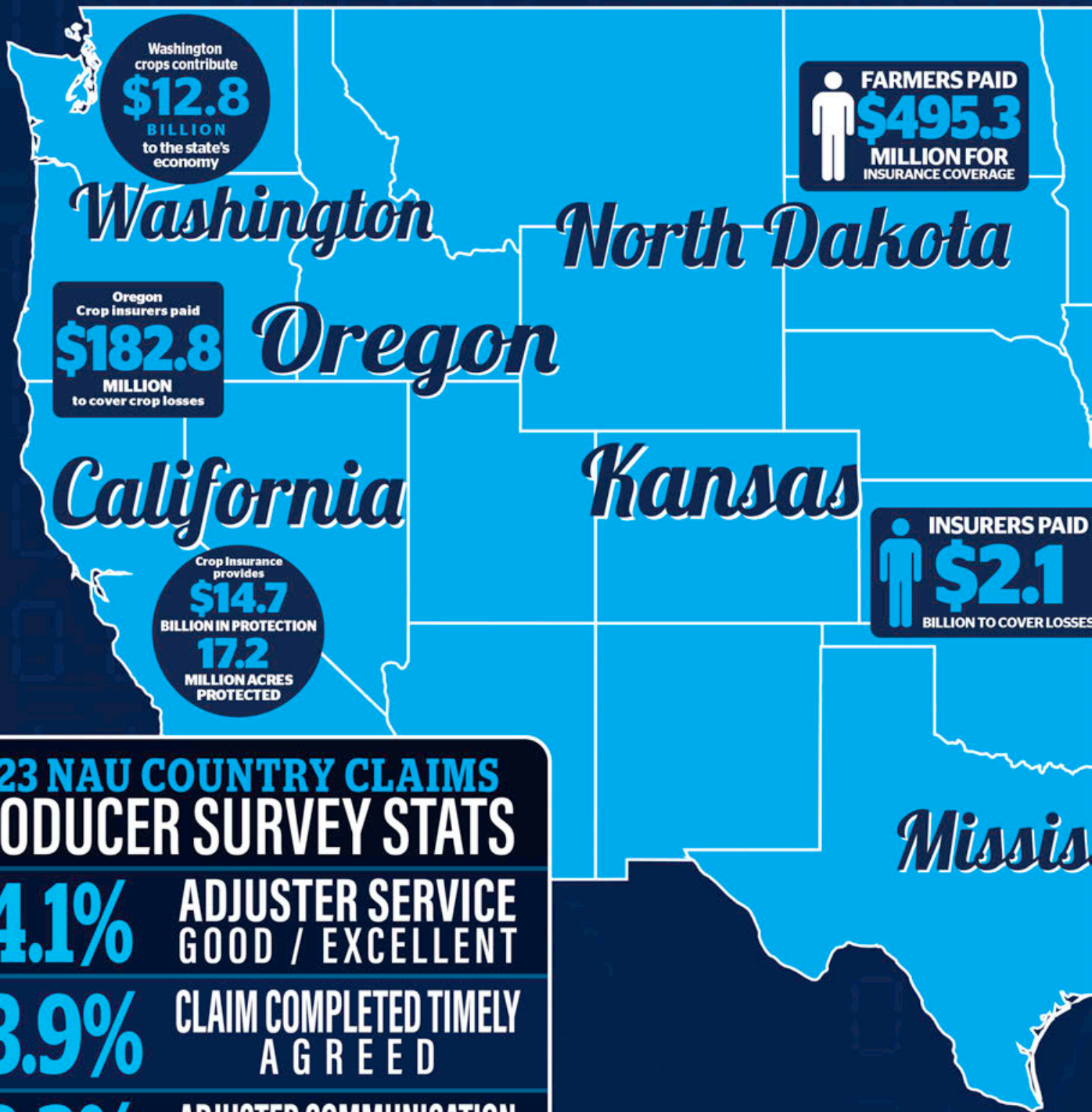
Learn about NAU Country's Commodity Market Commentary options with Rich Morrison at <https://www.naucountry.com/grainmarketservices>. Watch and listen to The Thinking Cap episodes at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOYftmx_Aqq0aVLmMs9mQwb01P_-bvBJFq

Strategize for '25



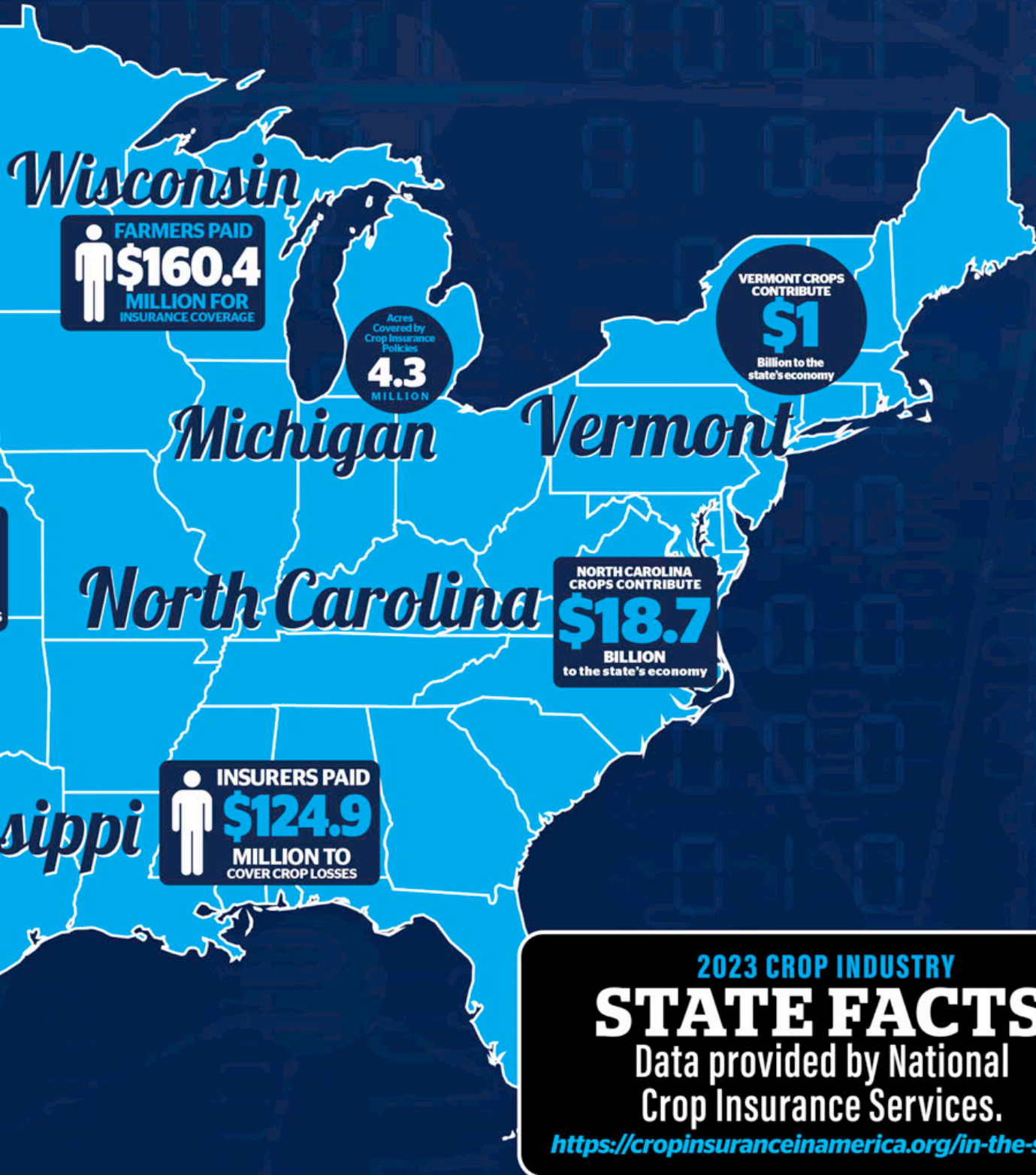
1. Have to consider using ECO to protect revenue band from 86% to 95% with premium support at 65%.
2. ARC-CO looks to have price advantage over SCO for many crops, and is free.
3. However, ARC-CO only protects 85% of base acres, which may or may not make it a strong option on all farms.
4. Revenue Protection is still needed to protect base revenue at the farm level.
5. Utilize the RP bushel guarantee to forward market when/if the market provides an opportunity to lock in a profit.

COVERAGE YOU NEED. SERVICE YOU DESERVE.



2023 NAU COUNTRY CLAIMS PRODUCER SURVEY STATS	
94.1%	ADJUSTER SERVICE GOOD / EXCELLENT
93.9%	CLAIM COMPLETED TIMELY AGREED
93.3%	ADJUSTER COMMUNICATION GOOD / EXCELLENT

At NAU Country, our goal is to deliver prompt, precise, and supportive assistance throughout the crop insurance claims process. With a team of more than 840 expert claim professionals nationwide, we ensure local expertise in adjusting regional crops right in your community. We prioritize timely communication and offer the NAU Country mobile app for real-time tracking of your claim status.



Southeast Branch Update



Greetings from the Southeast Branch. We are pleased to have everyone back in the office and enjoying our vibrant work environment. Our growth has allowed us opportunities to add new staff members, including our summer intern, Lawren Caldwell, while also celebrating milestone work anniversaries here in the Southeast. We have had everything from excessive rain in Arkansas to facing near-drought conditions in Virginia, but rest assured, our claims staff is fully prepared and looking forward to meeting with your growers to help them through these times.

As we move forward into 2025 and look for ways to continuously support you and your farmers, we want to thank you for your continued business and your commitment to all Southeast farmers.

EXCITING NEWS!

Agency Services is Now Account Relations

We are thrilled to announce that our department, formerly known as Agency Services, has undergone a name change and will now be known as Account Relations. This new name more accurately reflects our commitment to building and maintaining strong relationships with our valued agent partners and NAU Country staff. The decision to rebrand our department was driven by our ongoing dedication to serving you better. The new name, Account Relations, encapsulates a broader, relationship-centered approach. While our name has changed, our mission remains the same: to deliver exceptional support and solutions tailored to meet your needs. Our team continues to be committed to offering the highest standards of service, guided by our core values of integrity, professionalism, and excellence. We believe this change will help us better communicate the spirit of what we do and how we strive to make a positive impact in our interactions with you. As Account Relations, we look forward to continuing our partnership with you and ensuring your experience with us is as seamless and rewarding as possible.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. We are excited about this new chapter and the opportunities it brings to strengthen our relationship with you.



CAMP LEMONNIER DJIBOUTI AFRICA



FROM COMBAT TO CROPS: NAU Country's Partnership with the Department of Defense (DOD) SkillBridge Program

Earlier this year, a Senior Adjuster at NAU Country, Eric Otte, introduced the NAU Country Claims Department to the DOD SkillBridge Program. Otte is a proud member of the Nebraska National Guard, having served 13 years - present. Otte has been deployed twice while employed by NAU Country and sits on QBE's Valor Committee. He is committed to finding ways for QBE and NAU Country to give back and support our veterans. NAU Country's workforce includes many veterans, and our claims leadership team prioritized becoming an industry partner by developing a strategic plan to invest in this significant initiative for the company.

The DOD SkillBridge program connects transitioning service members with industry partners for real-world job experiences. During the last 180 days of service, service members can be granted up to 180 days of permissive duty to focus solely on training full-time with approved industry partners through specific industry training, apprenticeships, or internships.

In February, we piloted the program with LTC William "Bill" Wiesman, U.S. Army in Texas, our first military hire through the DOD SkillBridge program. Otte met Wiesman while they were both deployed from 2021-2022 in Djibouti, Africa, at Camp Lemonnier. The claims leadership team partnered with Eric Otte to create a training program to ensure service members were getting classroom training and field exposure to obtain their CAPP (Crop Adjuster Proficiency Program) Certification during the six-month program. Southern VP of Regional Claims Travis Moore, Texas AVP of Claims Kyle Sisk, and Texas AVP Field Claims Manager Bart McBeth successfully implemented and ensured that the training plan supported LTC Wiesman through his transition from military to civilian work life. LTC Wiesman immediately immersed himself into the NAU Country culture by attending the claims spring adjuster school during his first week.

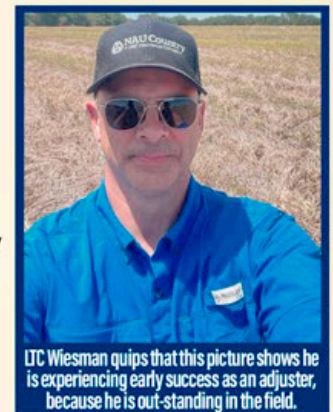
In addition, LTC Wiesman trained under Bart McBeth and Field Claims Specialist Josh Rieder and their team of adjusters, working claims throughout southern Texas with a variety of crops and claim types. LTC Wiesman noted that Claims Adjuster Casey Dugat was a great influence and resource on the daily job of a crop adjuster.

In addition, LTC Wiesman stated, "The field trainings were highly effective and informative. Even the spring adjuster school was awesome! Everyone was willing to talk and assist in my learning and onboarding. It couldn't be a better process. Comradery, fun, and strong work ethics."

His sentiment has been enthusiastic, saying, "The whole process was great. Working with the farmer and claims team is highly satisfying from start to finish and contributing to the livelihood of customers. I left one national security job to join another job with national security making sure that America's farmers and our food source are well cared for. From Combat to Crops."

LTC Wiesman commenced his full-time position with NAU Country as a Claims Adjuster in Texas on June 17, 2024, having passed all tests for the CAPP Certification in mid-July.

NAU Country was approved as an official SkillBridge Partner in April 2024 and is excited to have a targeted approach to engaging service members across the country and diversifying our talent. NAU Country is committed to continued partnership with the DOD SkillBridge program and is invested in assisting transitioning service members back into civilian training and work experience. The entire NAU Country team had a hand in making this SkillBridge program a success. Thank you to our People team, Accounting, and IT for providing excellent support and working through issues as the program developed.



LTC Wiesman quips that this picture shows he is experiencing early success as an adjuster, because he is out-standing in the field.



NAU COUNTRY AGENT DARRELL TENNIE RECEIVES OUTSTANDING OUTREACH AWARD

NAU Country Agent Darrell Tennie received the distinguished Crop Insurance Industry Outstanding Outreach Award at the 2024 Crop Insurance Industry Annual Convention held in Scottsdale, Arizona. Darrell is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Tennie Agriculture Group LLC™ a Tax & Accounting Firm that specializes in agribusiness development.

The Outstanding Outreach award recognizes an individual who provides outstanding service to all farmers, including outreach to small, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers.

Tennie Agriculture Group LLC operates in several states across the U.S., including U.S. territories. They strongly emphasize sustainability while ensuring scalability and assisting socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, including veterans. In addition, Tennie also serves on several advisory boards to organizations like the North Carolina A&T State University L.C. Cooper Jr. International Trade Centers' Advisory Board, Potlikker Capital Union Advisory Board, North State Bank Advisory Board, North Carolina State Employees Credit Union Advisory Board, and Knightdale Rotary Club. His dedication to education and empowerment for everyone is unending.

NAU Country Branch Executives attended the NCIS award ceremony in early 2024 and were able to join in the celebration and honor Darrell in person. The NAU Country family is so proud to work alongside Darrell. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!



PHOTO: Darrell Tennie was presented with a 2024 Crop Insurance Outstanding Outreach award by Scott Arnold (right), Chair of the National Crop Insurance Services Board of Directors and Tom Zacharias (left), President of National Crop Insurance Services.

Great Lakes Branch Update

Celebrating John McDermott's Retirement

Significant changes came to NAU Country this year with the retirement of Great Lakes SVP of Branch Operations John McDermott in January 2024. John is the epitome of service, and a chuckle or smile was always close at hand while in conversation with a colleague or client over his 38 years in the crop insurance industry. In 1984, John started as an independent Multi-Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI) and Crop-Hail agent in Charles City, IA, and then began working for an Approved Insurance Provider (AIP) in 1988. In addition to creating new business, John also managed claims. NAU Country has been honored to have John's expertise since 2005 in numerous roles, including Underwriting, Claims Supervisor, Marketing Representative, Marketing Manager, and SVP of Branch Operations.

John was involved in several regional and state committees through National Crop Insurance Services (NCIS) over the years and also supported the industry as a member of the NCIS Public Relations Committee (now known as the "Communications & Outreach Committee"). A highlight of John's career came in 2023 when he received the distinguished NCIS Industry Leadership Award, a testament to his dedication and service to the industry. John looks forward to spending his retirement with his lovely wife, Karen, playing pickleball, golfing, volunteering in the community, and, most importantly, spoiling his grandchildren. John mentored his successor, Mitch Rosenthal, through the end of 2023.

Read more about John's Industry Leadership Award at <https://www.naucountry.com/about-us/news/news-detail/2023/02/23/john-mcdermott-receives-industry-leadership-award>.



Announcing Mitch Rosenthal's Promotion

Congratulations are also in order to Mitch Rosenthal as he accepted the Great Lakes SVP of Branch Operations position. Rosenthal brings 13 years of experience in crop insurance, nine years with NAU Country Insurance Company. Rosenthal's success as a Lead Field Marketing Representative and deep industry knowledge made him an ideal candidate for this role. Outside of work, Rosenthal enjoys spending his time with his wife of 20 years, Erin, and his three children, Logan (17), Kiptyn (13), and Rylan (5). Rosenthal also enjoys coaching and supporting his children in baseball, football, and basketball, as well as visiting his family farm in central Illinois.

Please take a moment to congratulate both John McDermott and Mitch Rosenthal on their new journey.





RECOGNIZING EXCELLENT *Customer Service!*

Providing obsessive customer service to our NAU Country Agents and Farmers is our top priority. In recognition of this dedication, NAU Country launched the Customer Service Star Award program in 2022 to allow the chance for NAU Country employees across various departments to be nominated and recognized for their dedication and customer service excellence! Twice annually, NAU Country's internal committee reviews all the nominations and chooses the top 10 (20 for the year) submissions. This year, the review period will end in July and October. Any submissions after the October date will be included in next year's selections. Top submissions highlight outstanding efforts and showcase how these employees made a significant difference. We have been blown away by the responses and take immense pride in our exceptional team!

In 2023, grand prizes were awarded to NAU Country's VP, Infrastructure Manager Bill Perry and Senior Portfolio Analyst Ryan Bacon. Bill won a trip to attend the 2023 Grant Thornton Invitational in Naples, Florida, in December, while Ryan won a trip to Negril, Jamaica, for the 2024 Agent Trip this past January.

We encourage NAU Country employees to nominate a colleague and allow our agents to share their feedback when an NAU Country employee has exceeded expectations. Your nominations allow us to acknowledge them and continue to excel in our commitment to outstanding service.

Has an NAU Country team member provided exceptional service to you? Whether it's attentively addressing concerns, efficiently returning a call and providing you with accurate information, or just taking the time to explain a situation in the field, we want to hear about it!

To send in your nomination, NAU Country employees can click the **Employee Form** button. Agents may click the **Agent Form** button.



**DON'T BE SHY,
NOMINATE
A NAU COUNTRY CUSTOMER
SERVICE STAR TODAY!**

EMPLOYEE FORM >>>

AGENT FORM >>>



Nominees are recognized by NAU Country leadership. The top 20 nominated staff are entered to win the grand prize and given an additional monetary award for their hard work!

Bill Perry was nominated by SVP, Marketing Communications and Account Relations Hope Floberg.



Bill is the epitome of service internally and externally. Recently, I had an issue on a form where security was blocking users from prefilling the data. It was an issue that only affected internal employees. We had a workaround, but Bill still took the time to listen to the situation, understand the concerns, and fix the issue. I have probably 100 more examples of where he has saved the day, worked late into the evening, and jumped on an emergency call, but overall, **BILL IS A STAR!**



Ryan Bacon was nominated by former VP of Project Management Angela Hagen.



Ryan was asked earlier this year to take on the role of product owner for the OnBase solution. Since this application is used by many departments across NAU Country, it is important to understand how the system is used and how we can use it to create efficiencies. Ryan has been providing excellent customer service to the team and to all of the NAU Country users by working to understand how the system is used today, what could be improved, and providing a strong direction to get us using the system in a better way.

He has been working to understand the asks from the different departments, talking through impact and training needs, and ultimately has worked with all of the various customers to establish a short-term and mid-term roadmap to use this system. Of course, Ryan hasn't done this on his own, he has consistently provided a strong direction and helped the team become more efficient to deliver what matters the most.



Throughout the process, Ryan has engaged his co-workers from many departments to really understand the wants and needs. Thank you, Ryan, for all the work you have done to help improve the way we use OnBase!



DRAG. DROP. DONE.

Securely Upload Documents with Ease

Uploading crop insurance documents to our EASYwriter Pro® processing system has never been easier and more secure! Don't hassle with email, faxing, or snail mail. Instead, simply access our "Upload Document" feature to quickly upload important forms and documents. This new feature saves time when submitting completed NAU Country documents, and as a bonus, you can retrieve the documents from the system at your convenience!

ENJOY THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

- Upload from multiple locations in EASYwriter Pro or the NAU Country Agent Portal.
- Offers the same result as emailing documents@naucountry.com.
- Visual confirmation when the document has been uploaded.
- SMARTworkflow directs documents to your underwriter for processing, correct categorization, or archiving in the system.
- Capability to store and retrieve your crop insurance policy documents in one central location.
- Access your documents at any time.

HOW DOES IT WORK:

- Access the "Upload Document" feature in EASYwriter Pro or the Agent Portal.
 - This can be accessed from a policy, the "Documents" menu in EASYwriter Pro, or the "My Farmers" menu in the Agent Portal.
- Select a policy if one is not already in focus.
- Choose to upload your document to underwriting for processing or select to archive the file if you are uploading for ONLY storage purposes.
- Drag and drop documents into the space provided or search for a file.
- View your upload confirmation on the same screen.
- Retrieve submitted documents from the *Policy Documents* window in EASYwriter Pro or the *Documents and Forms* window in the Agent Portal.

For more detailed information on this process, access our [Upload Documents to EASYwriter® Pro Quickly and Easily with the Upload Document option](#) Agent Tips and Tricks.

IMPORTANT TIPS:

- Utilize the "Upload Document" feature for MPCI, Crop-Hail, Livestock, and Named Peril policy types. It is a policy-specific feature.
- Maximize processing time by keeping your upload to one policy and one document type (e.g., Acreage Report, Production Report, or Application) at a time.
- Accepted file types include PDF, TIFF, and JPG.
- Accepted maximum file size: 300 MB.
- Be aware of any issues encountered with an email provided to you from the system if any processing interruptions occur.
- Understand that documents uploaded to the system could be reviewed in an RMA Audit.

Contact your NAU Country Marketing Representative to check out this great feature today!



EASYbind

YOUR HASSLE-FREE SOLUTION TO BINDING CROP-HAIL

In the unpredictable world of agriculture, storms can wreak havoc on crops in the blink of an eye. That's why we're thrilled to unveil EASYbind, a revolutionary Crop-Hail Binder designed exclusively for crop insurance agents like you.

EASYbind is not just another feature - it's your invaluable tool for securing insurance coverage swiftly and seamlessly when ominous clouds loom on the horizon. Here's why it's a game-changer:

- **Lightning-Fast Submission:** When time is of the essence, utilize EASYbind! You can submit your Crop-Hail Binder directly from the NAU Country mobile app or the Agent Portal in less than a minute. No more delays or missed opportunities! Act swiftly to protect your farmers' fields.
- **Efficiency Redefined:** Say goodbye to cumbersome emails, texts, and phone calls. EASYbind streamlines the entire process, empowering you to bind insurance coverage from anywhere, anytime. Whether you're in the office or out in the field, managing your farmers' needs has never been easier.
- **Organized Workflow:** EASYbind ensures that your Crop-Hail Binder requests are organized and easily accessible to your underwriter. With a clear, structured workflow, we are able to stay on top of your submissions.
- **Peace of Mind Guaranteed:** We understand the importance of certainty in your line of work. With EASYbind, you'll receive instant confirmation via email upon submission, providing you and your farmers with the peace of mind you deserve. Rest easy knowing your farmers' Crop-Hail Binder is locked in and ready to go.

Don't let storm clouds catch you off guard. Embrace the power of EASYbind and take control of your Crop-Hail Binding process like never before. Experience the speed, efficiency, and reliability of EASYbind - because when it comes to protecting your farmers' livelihoods, every second counts.

DETAILS:

NAU Country continues to enhance our mobile application with EASYbind. EASYbind is available on corn, soybeans, and wheat nationwide, with the exception of Arizona, California, and Nevada. Additional crops are available in select states and counties. Creating a Crop-Hail EASYbind is a breeze on the NAU Country mobile app or your computer. Follow these five (5) steps:

- Upload/update the NAU Country mobile app, in addition to being on the latest iOS or Android version.
- Access your EASYbind feature and key in the required fields.
- Review and accept your Terms and Conditions.
- Complete the submission with your eSignature.
- Key and activate the coverage within our processing system or forward a copy of the final application with the insured's signature within seven (7) days of submitting the EASYbind document. Applications received after seven (7) days will be accepted, but the binding date and time will be based on the actual date and time received.

This is only an overview of the described process. It does not include all features, exclusions, or limitations. Binding effective time varies by state. Consult the [Crop-Hail Rate Books](#) for further details.

Contact your NAU Country Marketing Representative for further details or to set up a personal training.



FROM FIELDS TO SERVICE:



ANDREA NYSETH'S DUAL COMMITMENT AT NAU COUNTRY!

At NAU Country, we take pride in delivering exceptional service to our partnered agents and American farmers alike. Our commitment is bolstered by a team deeply rooted in agriculture, with many employees having personal ties to farming - some even maintaining their own farms. One standout example is Assistant Vice President of Account Relations Andrea Nyseth who not only oversees crucial aspects of our operations, but also manages a thriving 80-acre farm which includes apple trees, plum trees, blueberry plants, and an apiary.

Andrea brings a wealth of experience, having dedicated nearly five years to NAU Country across different time periods. Her department plays a pivotal role in managing agent and agency licenses, training, employee accounts, adjuster training, and properly submitting required documents, ensuring seamless service for our agents and their farmers. Under her leadership, the Account Relations team excels in customer care, driven by a passion for continuous improvement and a deep understanding of agricultural needs.

Beyond the office, Andrea's commitment to farming extends to Blueberry Ridge Orchard, a picturesque area that holds personal significance as it was passed down through her family. When the home and the land were brought up in discussions for potential selling, Andrea and her husband Mark decided to purchase it. Since then, they have transformed it into a thriving agricultural enterprise cultivating blueberries, planting apple and plum trees, and nurturing honeybee colonies through meticulous planning. They have transformed the land into a hub of productivity and familial joy.

Blueberry Ridge Orchard isn't just a farm, it's a place where memories are made. Visitors can enjoy picking blueberries, purchasing pre-picked produce, and indulging in locally sourced apples, plums, and honey at the Farmer's Market. Every corner of this land is steeped in history, adorned with



Learn more about Blueberry Ridge Orchard:
<http://blueberryridge-orchard.com>



relics of its past that add to its charm. This is a testament to Andrea and Mark's dedication to preserving its heritage.

SVP, Marketing Communications and Account Relations Hope Floberg recently traveled to the NAU Country Eau Claire office in Wisconsin, and was invited to Andrea's home. She stated, "I recently had the privilege of touring Blueberry Ridge Orchard, meeting Andrea's family, and witnessing firsthand the dedication and hard work that defines their lives. Andrea often attributes her innovative work ideas to her peaceful hours in the field, where picking blueberries allows her mind to wander freely. Her profound connection to the farming lifestyle enriches our team, ensuring that NAU Country remains not only efficient, but also deeply aligned with the needs of those we serve."

Andrea Nyseth exemplifies the spirit of NAU Country - dedicated, innovative, and deeply connected to the agricultural community. Her dual roles, both in the office and on the farm, underscore her commitment to excellence and her unique ability to understand and anticipate the needs of our customers. We are privileged to have Andrea Nyseth leading by example, bridging the worlds of business and agriculture with unwavering passion and expertise.



NAU COUNTRY'S NORTHERN BRANCH CELEBRATES INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE

Congratulations to Ron Hoff for winning the prestigious Professional Insurance Agents (PIA) of North Dakota Company Person of the Year award! NAU Country proudly had five other outstanding nominees: Josh Bukowski, Curt Christofferson, Michael Hanson, Jared Meyer, and Laura Tahran. Each one of them exemplifies excellence and dedication in their roles.

Ron grew up on the family farm in Taylor, North Dakota, where he still resides. He has farmed from the mid-70s and was involved in his family's dairy operation until 1998, when they sold off the herd. Ron's family continued to farm the land until they retired in 2019. Ron began his career in crop insurance with NAU Country in 2006. Most of his adjusting assignments were in the north and northwest portions of the state of North Dakota. For countless years, Ron has traveled many miles to adjust far away from home, but in a sense, it's become his "home away from home."

Described by peers as a hard worker and always willing to lend a helping hand, Ron is a respected mentor to new adjusters. His nominator describes him as the "gold standard" for adjusters. Ron's commitment to NAU Country and farmers is unmatched. He understands and exemplifies that adjusters are a vital link between the company and the American farmer.

When an adjuster wins this award, the most important perspective belongs to the farmers, so we sought their opinions.

Some of their comments include:

- Words that describe: Fair, Honest, Thorough, Knowledgeable, Respectful, and Relatable.
- "Ron is always true to his word and exudes a personality that brings comfort while working with him."
- "Ron understands crop insurance and can explain it in a relatable language."
- "Ron is punctual, precise, and efficient. Second to none."
- "Ron has been working on my claims for a long time and is more like an old friend or neighbor. I always enjoy catching up with him, and he is always willing to help."

Ron is married to his wife, Susan. They have three sons and nine grandchildren. His favorite hobbies include attending his grandkids' activities, playing cards, and having morning coffee at the local Cenex. We're so incredibly proud of Ron and our NAU Country nominees!



OLYMPIAN

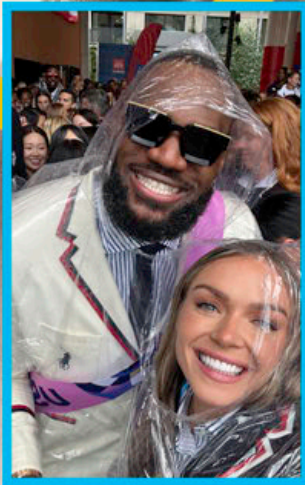
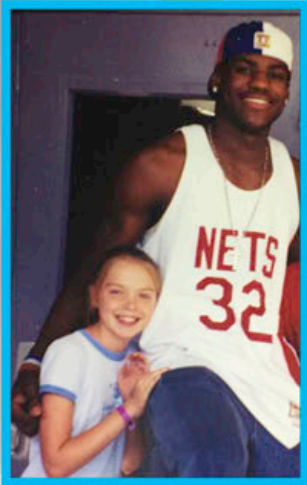


PROUD OF OUR NAU COUNTRY OLYMPIC FAMILY!

NAU Country Crop Adjuster William "Bill" Hawkins is a wonderful asset to our NAU Country family. His work ethic and dedication to helping serve Idaho farmers and agents is well respected. It's no wonder this hard-working, proud papa has an equally hard-working daughter with immense talent, a positive and inspiring attitude, and strength. And now, she has an amazing life accomplishment, as she just competed at the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris, France!

Chari Hawkins, a decorated track and field athlete, began her journey growing up in Rexburg, Idaho. Her father, Bill, coached basketball in their hometown for 29 years (36 years in total!), and

Chari enjoyed playing basketball, volleyball, and running track as a child. In 2002, her dad brought her to the Las Vegas Big Time Tournament, where middle and high school students play in a bracket-style event. This is where a young 11-year-old Chari had the opportunity to meet a 17-year-old high school basketball phenomenon named LeBron James. The two took an endearing picture at the time. Fast forward through the years, and Chari is part of Team USA's Olympic Opening Ceremony. She ran into LeBron at the event, reminded him of the tournament and the photo from 22 years prior, and LeBron and Chari took a reshot and a viral photo for the ages!



Chari's talents in sports were honed throughout the years as she became a natural in high jump and hurdles in high school. She soared through state-level competitions as a three-sport, four-year letterman. She attended a USA Olympic development meet in North Carolina during her senior year and took fourth in her competition. Olympic gold medal decathlete Dan O'Brien put the medal around her neck, and her career was just getting started! Chari had 84 Division 1 offers for track and field scholarships in college and selected Utah State University (Aggies) to train and excel between 2011 and 2015. After an impressive college career that included numerous NCAA Championships, Chari moved overseas to England with her husband and began graduate school. During her time there, Chari competed for the University of Bath, won a British championship, and became a professional track and field athlete in 2015. Chari has since competed in several heptathlon and pentathlon events, gathering skills, training her mind and body, and accomplishing personal bests in her field. Chari placed seventh at the World Indoor Championships in March 2024, and at the U.S. Olympic trials, she placed second and prepared for Paris!

Chari Hawkins competed for Team USA in the heptathlon two-day event on August 8-9, 2024.

The heptathlon is a series of seven track and field events, including the 100m hurdles, high jump, shot put, 200m dash, long jump, javelin throw, and the 800m run. It's a test of endurance, skill, speed, and gravity-defying movements.

It was an exciting experience to behold as the entire Hawkins family (parents Bill and Peggy, their two daughters and two sons, and their wives) were all in attendance to support Chari, an inspiration to so many! Speaking on the phone with Bill, while he was in Paris prior to his daughter's competition, it was so abundantly clear that the love for his daughter shines more brightly than any medal and that the pride of a parent seeing their child reach such a milestone is truly an amazing gift.

Congratulations, Chari Hawkins, on your incredible journey to the Olympics and representing Team USA!

NAU COUNTRY

Cares!

NAU Country and QBE take pride in service. When an opportunity arises to donate funds or time, NAU Country appreciates being able to contribute to various programs and make significant positive impacts in our communities.



In October 2023, NAU Country and our parent company, QBE, participated in a QBE Foundation corporate event volunteer opportunity with City Harvest. Employees at various branch offices created over a thousand mesh bags between the Northern Regional Branch office in Fargo, ND, and the corporate office in Ramsey, MN, to distribute produce and food to people in need.

Throughout the past year, employees in the Northern Regional Branch office based in Fargo, ND, have volunteered for several organizations, including the Great Plains Food Bank, where the team worked to fill boxes that help supplement families in rural North Dakota and surrounding areas. The office staff also volunteered with a Feed My Starving Children meal-packing event in Fargo, ND. Feed My Starving Children is an organization dedicated to providing nutritious meals to children worldwide. In addition, staff made monetary donations and built personal care packages benefiting Fargo Public Schools for students needing additional summer assistance.

In March 2024, NAU Country received a \$5,000 grant from the QBE Foundation to fund a new FFA Education Building in Napoleon, ND. Construction is starting soon!

Learn more about these organizations at:

- <https://www.cityharvest.org>
- <https://www.fmcs.org>
- <https://www.greatplainsfoodbank.org>
- <https://www.ndffa.org>

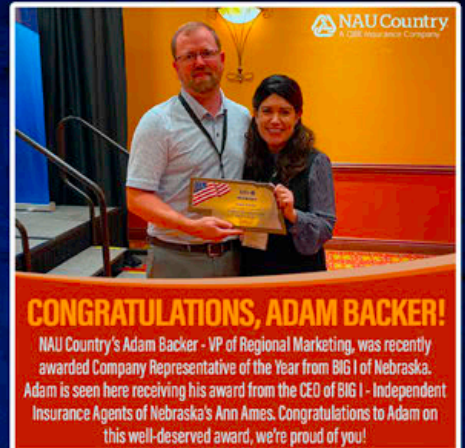


SPOTLIGHT ON OUR Employees!

ADAM BACKER

NAU Country's Central Branch VP of Regional Marketing Adam Backer was awarded the Company Representative of the Year from BIG I of Nebraska in October 2023. Adam is shown here receiving his award from the CEO of BIG I - Independent Insurance Agents of Nebraska Ann Ames.

Congratulations to Adam on this well-deserved award, we're proud of you!



SHANE KVALEVOG

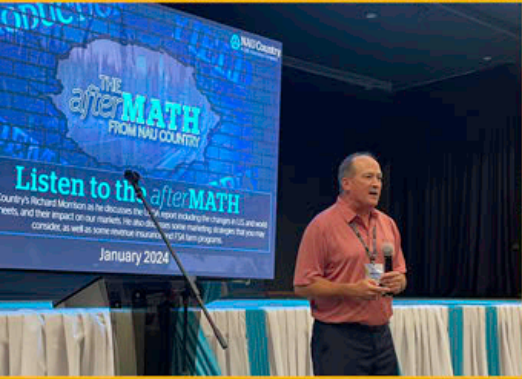
NAU Country's Lead Business Analyst, Shane Kvalevog, spent four days in Denver, CO, at the 2023 Olympic Curling Athlete Identification Camp. The Denver Curling Center hosted the event, where athletes participated in ice curling instruction on and off the ice. Steve Emt, two-time Paralympian, and current National Team member, led on-ice instruction. Eight other athletes were invited from across the United States.



DUWAYNE PETERSON

Congratulations to NAU Country Senior Claims Adjuster Duwayne Peterson on his recognition award for serving as Chair for the National Crop Insurance Services (NCIS) Minnesota Regional/State Committee in 2023, and his reelection for 2024. His award was presented by Mark Zarnstorff, NCIS director of agricultural research and technology and liaison for the North Dakota and Minnesota Committees.





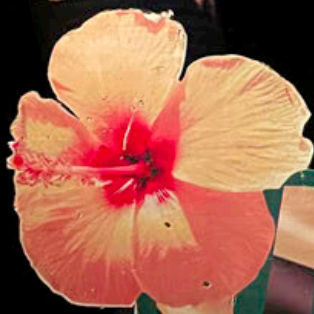
NAU COUNTRY'S 2024 AGENT TRIP: A CARIBBEAN ESCAPE TO REMEMBER



Amidst the swaying palms and crystal-clear waters of Negril, Jamaica, NAU Country's Agent Trip unfolded as a remarkable fusion of business and pleasure. This tropical paradise allowed NAU Country staff and our partnered agents the privilege of forming deeper connections and making lasting memories together.

AGENT TRIP 2024





JAMAICA

The events kicked off with a lovely beach reception, where everyone had the opportunity to meet, reconnect, and just take a breath of fresh air. The evening set the stage for the week ahead, which included business mixed with fun!

A 'Chat with the Chiefs' launched our meetings, allowing our agents to engage directly with President Jim Korin and COO Mick Deal. Questions spanned from seeking business advice to fun anecdotes like their first cars, which fostered a light-hearted and enjoyable discussion. In addition, we proudly honored Ryan Bacon, recipient of the esteemed NAU Country Customer Service Star Award, whose dedication and display of our core company values won him a ticket to the Agent Trip.



The week continued with a blend of professional enrichment and industry insights, featuring sessions on the latest political updates regarding the Farm Bill with NAU Country's Political Advocate Matt Shertz and SVP, Compliance & General Counsel Doug Jakway, and a comprehensive Commodity Market update with VP, Farm Services Rich Morrison.



Inspirational intensity filled the air as we welcomed motivational speaker John Kriesel. His stirring words opened our eyes to a new perspective on how we live our lives and ignited a flame of motivation and resilience within us all. His positivity was infectious.

Among the educational pursuits, we embraced the spirit of camaraderie through many exhilarating activities, from spirited rounds of sand volleyball to jumping off the cliffs at Rick's Café to the lively foam parties that had us all enjoying the moment.

As the sun dipped below the horizon on our final day, we gathered for a farewell formal dinner and dance, where cherished friendships were celebrated and memories were made.

Looking ahead, we hope you will join us for the 2025 Agent Trip in the picturesque Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. As we bid adieu to the sun-kissed shores of Jamaica, we eagerly anticipate the opportunity to create new memories, forge deeper connections, and celebrate the shared successes that unite us.



GOING BANANAS OVER SAVANNAH!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2024 NATIONAL MARKETING MEETING



The 2024 National Marketing Meeting took place in Savannah, GA, from July 22 to 25. We kicked off the event with a valuable Agent Advisory session, where we gathered crucial insights into what is working in the field and areas needing improvement. We take this feedback seriously and are always attentive to the perspectives of our partner agents. The evening also included a moving tribute to Becky Braaten of Town & Country Insurance Agency, LLC from Minot, ND, whose term on our Agent Advisory Council has come to a close. Becky has been a crucial voice and steadfast contributor to our advisory group for seven years. Her valuable insight and dedication have left a lasting impact.

The evening reception celebrated our company's growth with service awards for NAU Country's Marketing Representatives. The top five areas of growth were recognized. In one instance, the tie for an award was determined by an intense game of rock, paper, scissors, resulting in the Southeast Branch securing second place over the Great Lakes Branch.

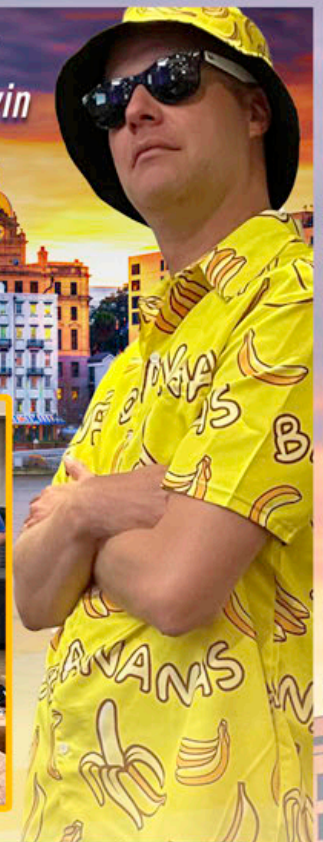
Discussions throughout the meeting covered significant topics such as strategic growth, maintaining our existing services, and pursuing the right business opportunities. We also explored updates in commodity markets, political developments,

Account Relations, and technological advancements. A strong emphasis was placed on cultivating a positive company culture, where focusing on employee value translates into enhanced customer value. Our brand identity is central to our success, and everyone is committed to upholding it and emphasizing the NAU Country way.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the engaging *Savannah Banana* exercise, which brought everyone together in a fun and interactive way. This event highlighted a new way of providing customer service excellence. We concluded the meeting by honoring our Marketing Representatives who earned two or more Customer Service Star Awards. We recognized 15 individuals who received more than one submission from our partner agents. Notably, Lead Marketing Representative Nick Oswald from our Central Branch stood out with five nominations.

Despite a busy agenda, there was plenty of opportunity for team bonding and enjoyment. Many participants enjoyed a land and sea tour, immersing themselves in the rich history of our meeting location. We couldn't ask for a better team in the industry - **proud to be NAU Country!**

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change. - Charles Darwin



PEELING AWAY THE CHAOS WITH A SMILE



Our National Marketing Meeting took an unexpected twist with the July 2024 CrowdStrike software update fiasco, making travel to and from the event a bit of an adventure. Many of our team members faced canceled flights, grueling 10-12 hour car rides, and long waits at the airport. Despite these challenges, our team's resilience and adaptability shone through. Nearly everyone made it to the meeting, and we swiftly leveraged virtual options for those who couldn't join us in person.

It was impressive to see how smoothly Jordan Atkinson, our Southeast Branch Manager hosting this year's event, and Angie Long, our Marketing Meeting Event Planner, handled the constant changes. As Jordan put it, "The welcome to Savannah felt even more special when our teams finally arrived."



Just when we thought our travel woes were behind us, our luxury bus transporting over 50 people to the airport ran into overheating issues and eventually broke down along the way. If you happened to spot a stylish group of people stranded by the side of a busy Savannah highway with piles of luggage a few weeks ago, that was us! The bus's motto, "A Window Seat to Happiness," seemed a bit ironic at that moment. Fortunately, another bus came to our rescue just in time to get us to the airport. This memorable incident sparked plenty of laughter as we imagined how our team must have looked in that situation.

One thing's for sure, our NAU Country crew knows how to turn a travel nightmare into a fun story. Lead Field Marketing Specialist Dalys Dahlquist said it best, "If you are going to be stranded, you want it to be with this group of people!"

EMPOWERING



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2023 IT SUMMIT



The 2023 NAU Country IT Summit kicked off on August 8, 2023, in Fargo, North Dakota. Over 165 NAU Country IT employees and executives gathered from across the nation to attend the event. The Summit focused on NAU Country's initiative of Supporting the American farmer, strategies around customer excellence, and how to maintain a focus on mental health and employee advocacy.

A keynote speaker and mental health advocate delved into the critical topic of mental health, focusing on the workplace. This discussion created an openness between the team as we work to make NAU Country an organization that continually puts employees' mental well-being at the forefront, fostering an environment where individuals feel supported and empowered to prioritize their mental health in their personal and professional lives.

A new technology was introduced during the IT Summit, which uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered automation to better process and retrieve data from complex documents. This technology was implemented into NAU Country's claim adjusting software to help expedite the indemnity process and deliver excellent customer service to support the American farmer. As AI-powered technology advances, NAU Country is evaluating how it can be leveraged to enhance our capabilities. In addition, attendees heard from one of NAU Country's enterprise architects, who outlined the evolving landscape of cyber threats, emphasizing the need for continuously implementing measures to protect sensitive information.

EXCELLENCE!



NAU Country President Jim Korin and COO Michael Deal presented the State of NAU Country Address. They outlined how industry factors impacted the crop insurance industry and showcased how NAU Country's dedication to leveraging technology, customer-centric approaches, and attention to risk management strategies allows us to maintain a top position in the industry. SVP of Marketing Communications and Account Relations Hope Floberg joined the conversation to demonstrate how employees can tailor NAU Country's broader strategic goals to fit their day-to-day tasks, allowing for continuous commitment to excellence, innovation, and sustainable development in the crop insurance sector.

Another key highlight of the Summit was the agent panel, allowing employees and agents to discuss where NAU Country excels and where improvements can be made. The panel emphasized collaboration and partnerships within the industry, illustrating how these alliances contribute to NAU Country's growth and ability to provide comprehensive technology and reliable coverage to the American farmer.

After the first day of meetings, employees gathered for an evening of fun at the Fargo-Moorhead Redhawks baseball game. Though there was a rain delay in game play, it did not delay the fun as employees enjoyed a night full of laughter, team bonding, and catching up on friendships.

ON THE ROAD NAU COUNTRY with

NAU Country Insurance Company had a busy start to 2024, participating in three major national tradeshow across the U.S. within two months! These events provide a fantastic opportunity to connect with farmers, agents, and industry professionals and to share insight and strategies for the upcoming growing season.



SOUTHERN FARM SHOW

January began our tradeshow journey with the 2024 Southern Farm Show in Raleigh, North Carolina. NAU Country representatives met with farmers, agents, and claims specialists throughout the three-day event. The Southern Farm Show announced stats stating that of the farmers in attendance, over 56% grow soybeans, 32% farm hay or tobacco, and 29% produce grain/wheat. Southeast Branch team members were on hand to discuss the latest risk management strategies and industry-leading technology to assist farmers and agents in preparing for the new season.



NATIONAL FARM MACHINERY SHOW

February brought us to the National Farm Machinery Show (NFMS) in Louisville, Kentucky. This well-attended event attracts over 300,000 visitors to the Kentucky Exposition Center, showcasing a comprehensive equipment, services, and technology display. NAU Country was honored by the number of attendees who visited our booth. Our representatives enjoyed discussing risk management strategies and our innovative technology with both new and returning visitors. We had a record-breaking number of policyholder visits this year! The NFMS provides a great venue for over 900 exhibitors across nearly 27 acres of interconnected indoor space for networking and sharing knowledge.



COMMODITY CLASSIC

At the end of February, Marketing Representatives from the Southern Branch and IT Marketing staff attended the Commodity Classic show in Houston, Texas. Each year, thousands of the nation's farmers attend Commodity Classic to discover what's new in agriculture and attend important annual meetings for various crop boards and organizations. NAU Country staff enjoyed visiting with attendees to discuss the crop industry and upcoming changes and even got to explain crop insurance to some producers visiting from outside the U.S.!

In addition to the tradeshow, our team had the unique opportunity to attend the Houston Rodeo. This event, celebrating the skills of the American cowboy, featured thrilling competitions in bareback riding, bull riding, saddle bronc riding, and steer wrestling. It was a delightful evening of entertainment and sportsmanship, offering a chance for our staff to enjoy the largest rodeo in the United States.



2024 NAU COUNTRY CLAIMS SUMMIT ENHANCING LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY

The 2024 NAU Country Claims Summit convened in Scottsdale, AZ, during the week of January 29, gathering claims leadership staff from across the nation. This year's summit centered on developing our skills as People Leaders.

Senior Vice President of Claims Mark Mossman opened the Leadership Summit on January 30, expressing gratitude to the entire claim's organization for their hard work and unwavering commitment to NAU Country's policyholders.

National Claims Leaders Brad Fink and Anthony Schmode led sessions where attendees discussed claims department strategies and goals, aligning these with NAU Country's corporate objectives. Ideas were synthesized by Claims VPs into a cohesive NAU Country Claims Strategy document, pivotal in guiding our team's growth and reinforcing NAU Country's broader strategy, while also shaping our interactions with colleagues, agents, and farmers.

Sessions led by VP People Business Partner Katrina Watkins, Employee Relations Lead Jennie Lueder, People Business Partner Emma Stock, and Organizational Design Lead Lauren Nevils delved into best practices for recruiting and onboarding, goal setting, fostering positive employee relations, and promoting inclusive leadership. These interactive sessions proved to be highly informative.

Senior Specialist at Wipfli, LLP Brandy Currie delivered a keynote on navigating crucial conversations effectively, emphasizing the importance of timely communication for successful outcomes.

The summit concluded with a team-building event at Puzzle Rides of Scottsdale, where participants competed on rotating teams to solve puzzles of varying complexities. Individual and team achievements were celebrated with ribbons and bragging rights.



QBE/NAU COUNTRY AND FFA:

A Beneficial Partnership for the Future of Agriculture

The QBE Foundation and NAU Country proudly support the National FFA Organization! Our partnership and sponsorship with the National FFA Foundation are setting up the success of our future farmers.

Since 2021, NAU Country and QBE have sent staff to participate in events, meetings, and host our sponsored booth at the annual National FFA Convention. If you plan to attend this year's convention, stop by booth #1919 to visit with us! Learn more about the 2024 National FFA Convention & Expo - October 23-26, 2024, in Indianapolis, IN!

Check out the story from the National FFA Organization, highlighting our company's commitment to serving and supporting FFA in the many years ahead!



Original publish date: November 30, 2022 | The National FFA Organization > Foundation | New Partnership is Beneficial for the Future of Agriculture | By Nicole Buckley | Source: <https://www.ffa.org/foundation/new-partnership-is-beneficial-for-the-future-of-agriculture>

“Our food, fiber and fuel supply all depend on the future of these bright young people,” says Jim Korin, president of NAU Country—a five-star corporate partner of the National FFA Foundation.

When NAU Country—the crop division of QBE Insurance Company—decided to support the National FFA Organization, this notion was a top consideration. A generous gift from the QBE Foundation made the philanthropic connection with FFA possible. Their support of the American FFA Degree program, among other programs, helps recognize members with outstanding leadership skills and exceptional agricultural knowledge. Korin, who was an integral player as a champion of the new partnership, says, “The agriculture profession is noble, vibrant and essential for all.”

Since they signed on in early 2021, the company and its employees have been actively engaged in FFA activities, such as judging for national competitions. Many serve as volunteers and supporters at local chapters and regional events. In 2021 and 2022, the company exhibited at the National FFA Convention & Expo, with several NAU Country employees staffing the booth. As a nationwide company based in Minnesota, and in reflecting the values of their parent company, it was important to NAU Country to ensure their employees’ wishes were also met.

“We want to invest our time and funds into an organization that our employees are passionate about. It’s important for them to be involved in giving back and strengthening our

communities,” explains Michelle Adams, business support manager at NAU Country. “With so many of our employees being FFA Alumni and farmers to this day, it was the perfect match!” As the primary risk management tool for farmers, crop insurance plays a significant role in American agriculture. Former FFA members, Adams says, are an asset to NAU Country in many ways. “They understand the many depths and layers of farming and agriculture and are able to use that background to provide superior customer service to our insureds (farmers),” continues Adams. Though the partnership is new between QBE/NAU Country and National FFA, its positive effect is already deeply resonating with both entities.

Dave Paul, vice president of underwriting at NAU Country and a member of the National FFA Foundation Sponsors’ Board, is confident the partnership between NAU Country and FFA will impact today’s agricultural landscape. Paul says, “It’s vital for NAU Country to support FFA and the next generation of farmers, ranchers and agricultural industry leaders. These young FFA members will become our leaders at the local, state, and national levels, shaping our industry for years to come.” Jordan Atkinson, senior vice president of NAU Country branch operations, agrees, “I can’t think of a better organization that we could invest our precious resources into. It has been a pleasure working closely with FFA to see that our youth receive the attention and resources they so greatly need.” Atkinson continues, “We are very excited about the future of the relationship between QBE/NAU Country and FFA. Their legacy and the impact that they have on both rural and urban agriculture are something that we are honored to be associated with.”

Updates since publish date: NAU Country has exhibited at the National FFA Convention in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Michelle Adams’ title has been updated to VP, Strategic Initiatives at NAU Country.

EMPOWERING WOMEN



BREAKING BARRIERS AND *Building Success!*

In the crop insurance world, where challenges can be as unpredictable as the weather, women often face unique obstacles on their path to success. Recognizing this, in 2020, NAU Country championed a groundbreaking initiative, Women in Agribusiness, to empower women to overcome barriers and excel in their careers.

The journey of Women in Agribusiness began with a group of dedicated women attending the Women in Agribusiness Summit in Minneapolis, MN, in 2019. What started as a local initiative soon evolved into a structured program. The program was initiated by VP of Strategic Initiatives Michelle Adams and VP of Regional Marketing Rebecca Hudson. These ladies worked with our Talent and Development team at QBE to form the first cohort of Women in Agribusiness. Over time, VP People Business Partner Katrina Watkins and SVP of Marketing Communications and Account Relations Hope Floberg also assisted in the facilitation of the program as it continued to expand into multiple cohorts and sessions focused on leadership development and empowerment. The program has witnessed remarkable outcomes with each cohort, including role changes, career advancements, and personal growth for all participants.

One of the primary concerns addressed by the Women in Agribusiness program is the perception of a male-dominated executive and leadership landscape within NAU Country and the industry. With the exception of underwriting, men have historically occupied leadership roles, creating a barrier for women seeking advancement. Through targeted sessions and discussions, the program works to break down these barriers, providing women with the tools and confidence to navigate and thrive in this traditionally male-dominated environment.

“There are many wonderfully talented women working in the agriculture industry and at NAU Country.



Through the Women in Ag trainings and discussions, I've seen where this program has built confidence in women to lead with their full potential.”

Kathryn Ryan
VP, Regional Claims

WOMEN IN AGRIBUSINESS

“My personal take-aways from the program have been awareness around imposter syndrome and using that awareness to build confidence. Practicing letting go of perfectionism, celebrating successes, and growing from mistakes have been key developmental factors. I am grateful to work for a company who supports and invests in the growth of their employees and am so proud of what this program and the women who have completed the program have accomplished thus far.”

Michelle Adams
VP, Strategic Initiatives



Succession planning has been an area of focus within the company. The program has raised awareness among many of our senior leaders when making future decisions. It has also encouraged participants to challenge this perception and advocate for themselves, ensuring they are noticed for advancement opportunities. By fostering a transparent and equal opportunity culture, Women in Agribusiness empowers women to step forward and pursue their career aspirations without reservation. In 2023, women held 14.6% of leadership roles at NAU Country, an 8.3% increase from 2021 when the program began. Overall, women hold 39.4% of global leadership roles (including NAU Country and QBE combined).

Navigating the path to career advancement can be daunting, especially without clear guidance on standing out and progressing within the company. Women in Agribusiness addresses this gap by providing participants with insights into available opportunities, important qualifications, and strategies for visibility and advancement. By equipping women with the knowledge and resources they need to succeed, the program paves the way for their professional growth and development.

A key aspect of the Women in Agribusiness program is the emphasis on holistic industry knowledge and professional networking. Participants gain a deeper understanding of the business and company while expanding their global networks both within and outside NAU Country and QBE. By fostering connections and community within the insurance industry, the program creates a supportive environment where women can thrive and succeed together.

As Women in Agribusiness continues to expand and evolve, its impact resounds throughout the industry. By breaking down barriers, encouraging empowerment, and building a strong community of women leaders, the program is driving meaningful change and shaping the future of crop insurance.

We're excited to announce that the fourth cohort will commence in the fall of 2024.

“The Women in Agribusiness program is important because it shows NAU Country’s dedication to build, develop, and retain a diverse leadership group. Women in Leadership programs have proven to produce results including higher retention rates, larger networks, increased knowledge and confidence, and a better understanding of the company’s organizational structure. It is empowering women to take that next step and to challenge themselves. I am fortunate to be working for a company that understands the importance of having a program like this.”

Tara Marotz
VP, Regional Underwriting



HAPPY Retirement!

Please join us in extending our best wishes to our incredible NAU Country staff.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF LISA BAUER: A PILLAR IN ACCOUNT RELATIONS

After a memorable career spanning over four decades, Lisa Bauer, a revered member, and the originator of our Account Relations (formerly Agency Services) department, has retired. With her unparalleled expertise in crop insurance and an unwavering commitment to excellence, Lisa has been an indispensable part of our team. When a long-time employee announces their retirement, it often prompts the rest of the team to consider how quickly they can absorb their extensive knowledge before their departure. This scenario rang particularly true when Lisa Bauer shared her retirement plans.

Lisa's journey in the crop insurance industry began over 40 years ago. Her extensive knowledge of the Risk Management Agency (RMA) rules and regulations, as well as the Department of Insurance rules and regulations, has been instrumental in navigating the complexities of the field. Her expertise in appointing and terminations has ensured smooth operations and compliance, contributing significantly to the success of our organization.

Throughout her career, Lisa has been known for her meticulous attention to detail and her deep understanding of the intricacies of crop insurance. Her ability to interpret and apply regulatory guidelines has not only safeguarded our company but has also provided a solid foundation for training and mentoring countless colleagues. Lisa's dedication to maintaining the highest standards earned her the respect and admiration of everyone who has had the privilege to work with her.

HONORING BARRY OLSON'S 50-YEAR CAREER IN THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

Congratulations to Barry Olson, who retired in July 2023. Barry's career in agriculture spanned over five decades, with around forty years dedicated to the crop insurance industry. He began his robust career as an adjuster, witnessing the transformative shift in the industry from about 30% of producers participating in the crop insurance program when he began to an impressive 90% today. Barry's passion for his work was fueled by the relationships he built with colleagues and agents, filling each day with positivity.



Beyond her professional achievements, Lisa's warm personality and willingness to lend a helping hand made her a beloved figure in the workplace. Her colleagues often speak of her as a mentor and friend, someone who was always ready to share her wealth of knowledge and offer guidance. Lisa's retirement marks the end of an era, but her legacy will continue to inspire and guide us.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for her years of service and dedication. We wish Lisa a wonderful and joyous retirement filled with new adventures and cherished moments. Though she is greatly missed, her legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of all who had the honor of working with her.



NAU Country VP of Regional Marketing Curt Christofferson, a close coworker and friend, summarized his impact: "Barry has been a mentor and a valuable friend. Barry has shown his leadership on various national committees, as a branch manager, and as an excellent marketing representative. Barry is a true legend in the crop insurance industry. We all wish Barry well in his retirement. He will be missed!"

To celebrate Barry's retirement, NAU Country staff and his friends and family gathered for an evening full of laughter, shared memories, and a touch of heartfelt nostalgia. Barry was also honored with a Distinguished Service award at the 2023 BIG I North Dakota Banquet, a testament to his impact on the industry.

A STEP TOWARDS RETIREMENT: DAVE PAUL

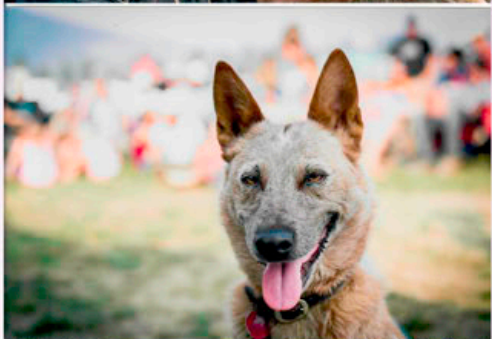
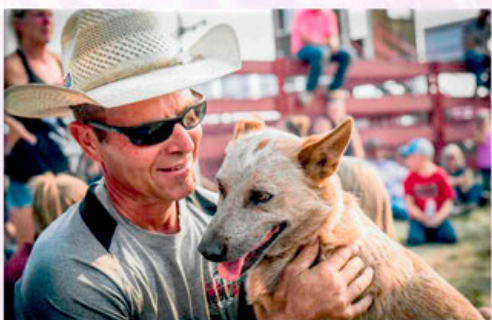
NAU Country is taking a step towards another transition with the retirement announcement of VP of Underwriting - RMA Special Products Dave Paul. Dave will transition from his lead role on Whole Farm to a part-time advisory role where he will share his experience and expertise as needed.

Dave has worked with NAU Country for eight years, and in March 2024, started his steps towards retirement. Those who know Dave know he won't be resting on his laurels, perhaps a saddle or two, spending time with his lovely wife and family (and as a proud grampa!), his community, horses, and beloved dog, Duke.

Dave worked as the RMA Director of the Pacific Northwest and came to NAU Country as our Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) expert. Over the years, Dave was very influential in the writing of the WFRP policy and the Adjusted Gross Revenue policy. He traveled the country and presented workshops with relevant details to producers in each area. Through his passion for the program and education for producers and agents, sales increased exponentially under WFRP since its inception in 2015. Among many of Dave's volunteering efforts spanning his community, Dave worked to help NAU Country sponsor the Columbia River Circuit Finals Rodeo in 2019, and he also served on the National Sponsor's Board with the FFA. Dave has been a constant advocate for education in agriculture, and his passion for FFA and love for NAU Country is steadfast and inspiring.

When interviewed in 2018, Dave said, "When I was a kid, I wanted to be a cowboy. Today, I am, actually! I love my job, and when I finally retire for good, I would like to spend more time starting young horses, learning how to rope better, and coaching kids." Dave's affable nature has made him a respected and beloved colleague. The fact that he was a bull rider for around 15 years only bolsters that regard!

As Dave shifts from his full-time role, Clacey Miller and Kyle Craig will assume responsibility for overseeing our Whole Farm and Micro Farm processing and will be the main points of contact for our Whole Farm Underwriting team. Kyle Craig will be primarily responsible for the Northwest, Western, and Central Branches, and Clacey Miller will be mainly responsible for the Northern, Southern, Southeast, and Great Lakes Branches. Congratulations to Dave in his retirement, as he saddles up for the next adventure!



HAPPY Retirement!

Please join us in extending our best wishes to our incredible NAU Country staff.

ANTHONY BERNARD

Anthony Bernard retired at the end of July 2024. Anthony has been in the crop insurance industry since 2008, and with NAU Country for 12 years. He has been in his current role as a Claims Specialist for the southern portion of California/Arizona for the last 10 years. He has served on the EASYjuster Pro® team and has been an integral part of training both in the field and at adjuster schools, sharing his many years of knowledge. We want to thank Anthony for all his time and efforts. He will be greatly missed.

JIM DELONG

Claims Adjuster James (Jim) DeLong retired on July 13, 2024. Jim began crop adjusting in 1993. In 2004, Jim started as a contract adjuster with NAU Country in Missouri. In 2016, Jim accepted a full-time adjuster position. As Jim embarks on this new chapter of his life, we want to express our best wishes. He looks forward to enjoying his family, horses, and grandchildren in retirement. We congratulate Jim on his wonderful career!

LYNN GOLDHAHN

Lead Field Marketing Specialist Lynn Goldhahn will retire at the end of 2024. Lynn has enjoyed 25 years in the crop insurance industry, playing a vital role in growing our Montana business and overall success as a branch. We are sad to see Lynn go but happy he'll get to spend more time with his family in retirement. We will always appreciate his impact on our company. We thank Lynn for being a trusted partner to our agents and employees!

SUSAN HOLMES

NAU Country's State Continuing Education Coordinator, Susan Holmes, retired in January 2024 after dedicating 17 years to the crop insurance industry! Susan joined NAU Country in 2010. Companies are only as good as the people who represent them, and Susan has done her share and more to help make NAU Country successful over the past 14 years. Everyone she has worked with will miss her willingness to do "whatever it takes" with a smile on her face. Susan sent her best wishes to all NAU Country staff, saying, "I wish all at NAU Country much happiness, good health, safe travels, and Happy Training!" Please join us in wishing Susan all the best!

TOM TOLSON

VP, Regional Claims Manager (AZ, CA, NV) Tom Tolson will retire at the end of 2024 after 18 years with NAU Country! Tom will continue in his role throughout the year, and we want to thank him for all his efforts and hard work over the years!

DEAN TROSDAHL

Claims Adjuster Dean Trosdahl retired on July 8, 2024. In total, Dean worked with NAU Country for 15 years. In 2009, he started as a contract adjuster with NAU Country in Minnesota. In 2013, he transitioned to a full-time adjuster position. Dean looks forward to spending time with family, especially his grandchildren, and traveling in retirement. We thank Dean for his service and dedication to NAU Country over the years.

ROGER WILLHITE

Claims Adjuster Roger Willhite retired after a dedicated career on July 2, 2024. Roger began crop adjusting in 1997. In 2006, Roger started as a contract adjuster with NAU Country in Montana. In 2014, Roger accepted a full-time claims adjuster position. He looks forward to enjoying his family, riding his Harley, fishing, hunting, and retirement. As Roger embarks on this new chapter of his life, we express our best wishes and thank him for his commitment to service with NAU Country.

NAU COUNTRY CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

In March 2023, NAU Country, in collaboration with QBE, celebrated International Women's Day, highlighting women's social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. The Women's Initiative Network (WIN) hosted Shadé Zahrai, an award-winning leadership strategist, who spoke on "Embrace Equity: The Case for Embracing Gender (and Cognitive) Diversity." Zahrai discussed the benefits of equity for economic prosperity and the importance of a diverse workforce.

In 2024, NAU Country continued its commitment by participating in another WIN event featuring financial author Farnoosh Torabi. This year's theme, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress," promoted gender equality. Torabi discussed financial literacy and her book, "A Healthy State of Panic."

NAU Country offices across the nation celebrated with brunches, bringing colleagues together to participate in the events and honor the achievements and contributions of women.

GUEST SPEAKER FARNOOSH TORABI



Farnoosh Torabi is a multi-bestselling financial author, former CNBC host, and creator of the Webby-nominated podcast, So Money. She covered topics on financial literacy and her book, A Healthy State of Panic.





CELEBRATING WOMEN IN AGRIBUSINESS: ALUMNI REUNION AND THIRD COHORT LAUNCH

In April 2023, at the Corporate office in Ramsey, MN, NAU Country launched the third Cohort of its Women in Agribusiness program with a heartwarming reunion of all the women who have taken part. Over 30 remarkable women convened for a kick-off session unlike any other. President Jim Korin opened with a poignant address, emphasizing the program's significance for our company and the broader industry. He praised participants, past and present, for their dedication to NAU Country and relentless pursuit of excellence.

The gathering included engaging activities focused on **DiSC® profiles**, where groups explored their dominant characteristics through the lens of party planning - a truly eye-opening experience. Discussions delved into how our individual personalities shape leadership styles and strategies, promoting awareness and mitigating unconscious biases.

Among camaraderie and reflection, the new Cohort - comprising Shawn Schumacher, Tanya Harmon, Kelsey Bedard, Billie Shepard, Shari Fransen, Angie Jones, Ashley Raulerson, Bridgette Collins, Kim Durkes, and Priscilla Soto - collaborated on program insights, while past cohorts reconnected, sharing how their careers had evolved since their participation. These exchanges were truly inspiring, highlighting the transformative impact of the program.

Following a delightful evening of dinner and engaging conversations among inspiring women, the event concluded with an unexpected winter storm - a fittingly memorable touch of Minnesota charm.



The culmination in September 2023 saw ten participants from the third Cohort travel to Nashville, TN, for the prestigious National Women in Agribusiness Summit. This event celebrates women farmers, business leaders, and industry topics, where NAU Country proudly sponsors and engages with industry leaders. It's a testament to our commitment to supporting and empowering women in agriculture.

This reunion and subsequent conference underscore NAU Country's dedication to fostering leadership and camaraderie among women in agribusiness, shaping a brighter future for all in the industry.





INTERNSHIP Opportunities

Do you know of a student seeking an exciting internship with a reputable crop insurance company? Let them know about NAU Country Insurance Company's 10-week summer internship program!

NAU Country began its crop insurance internship program in June 2021. Since then, we've hosted 28 interns from varying colleges and universities preparing to graduate. Our interns have an agricultural background, either growing up on a farm or studying agriculture in school.

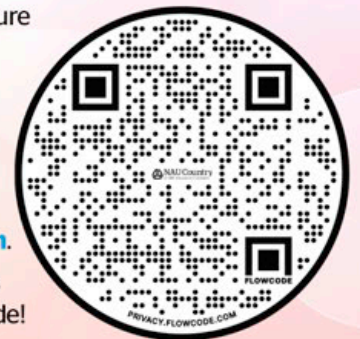
NAU Country's internship program offers students the chance to experience and learn from the industry's second-largest crop insurance Approved Insurance Provider (AIP)! During the internship, students will gain an understanding of the crop insurance cycle while working hands-on with departments including Marketing, Underwriting, Claims, and IT. Each year, students can apply and join one of these department's focused programs.

In 2024, nine interns attended meetings, visited branch offices, and joined webinars that introduced them to staff and teams outside their current track program. Learning about the company and the sum of its parts helps one understand how

everyone works together as a team. As each student prepares to end their internship program, they are asked to present about their experience at NAU Country and also work on a case study presentation with additional QBE interns. The program has been a success, as we've watched students grow and learn in the field and even join our claims team after graduation! We also have to thank our hard-working employees who help mentor the students and keep the program running, including but not limited to Joy Ratliff, Michael Hanson, Katie Ryan, Teresa Emerson, Kim Seguin, Michelle Adams, Katrina Watkins, and Clarissa Okpaleke.

We are thrilled to host the future of ag in our 2025 internship program! To learn more about this exciting opportunity with NAU Country, contact Clarissa Okpaleke at clarissa.okpaleke@qbe.com.

Check out our open positions today by scanning the QR code!



NURSERY INSURANCE PROGRAM

Continues to Grow!

Changes are happening for Nursery growers! When the Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced in February 2024 that they were expanding their Nursery Value Select (NVS) program to all states beginning with the 2025 Reinsurance Year (RY), the intent was to provide insurance options for a wide range of producers. Let's clarify what this means for the established Nursery Field Grown and Container (FG&C) program and NVS moving forward.

Beginning with the 2026 RY, the RMA will no longer offer insurance for nursery crops under the FG&C program. Insurance on nursery crops may now be purchased under the NVS program. The NVS policy addresses many concerns shared with RMA by nursery growers, agents, and Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs).

The following benefits are part of the NVS policy:

- The NVS policy is available in all states and counties
- The application and annual renewal processes have been simplified
- Sales Closing Dates are better suited to agronomic practices in use across the country and are better aligned with the Hurricane Insurance Protection-Wind Index endorsement, otherwise known as HIP-WI
- The producer has greater flexibility when determining which plant categories to insure
- On non-CAT (Catastrophic) policies, unit structure may be established by plant category
- Loss adjustment procedures place greater emphasis on the producer's actual sales receipts
- Loss adjustment procedures encourage producer participation in determining plant recovery

To meet program requirements, a nursery must sell 40% of its plants on a wholesale basis.



To provide our producers with the excellent claim service they deserve, it is vital to have accurate and up-to-date sales catalogs and sales records available for the adjuster. Catalogs and sales records are utilized to determine the value of the insured plants prior to damage occurring.

For NVS expansion areas only, producers may cancel their 2025 RY Nursery FG&C policy, provided specific criteria are met, and purchase a NVS policy. Coverage and premium on both the cancelled Nursery FG&C and the newly written NVS policies will be prorated, based on cancellation and effective dates.

With the availability of NVS throughout the country and the simplicity of the program, we are excited about the sales opportunities this product provides to our agency force!

Please contact your NAU Country Marketing Representative or Underwriter with any questions you may have.



Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) Endorsement Expansion:

NEW COST-SHARE INCREASE AND CROP INCLUSIONS SUPPORT AMERICAN FARMERS

NAU Country is excited to announce significant improvements to the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) endorsement, effective this fall.

Initiated by NAU Country in collaboration with agent and producer groups, ECO addresses concerns over shallow losses and the necessary access to options that offer higher coverage levels. This critical issue has intensified in recent years as commodity prices have declined while input costs have remained stubbornly high. ECO offers area-based supplemental shallow-loss coverage to complement individual coverage plans, shielding losses from 86% up to 90% or 95%.

ECO's success emphasizes the need to advocate for producer fairness by making the program affordable and expanding accessibility to more American farmers.

By harmonizing cost-share (subsidy) rates to match other area-based banded programs, ECO affordability for producers is improved. This aligns

with the cost-share levels of other programs like the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and Hurricane Insurance Protection-Wind Index (HIP-WI) endorsements. ECO's cost-share rates, previously set at 44% for Revenue Plans and 51% for Yield Plans, will increase significantly to 65%, beginning with the 2025 Crop Year (starting with the September 30 Sales Closing Dates).

NAU Country joined forces with Watts and Associates, an economic consulting firm specializing in risk management innovation, and together, they developed and launched ECO in 2021. Initially, 31 crops were available with the approval of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC). From the start, NAU Country recognized that a successful crop insurance program is one that helps as many producers as possible and has worked diligently to expand the program with particular emphasis on improving its availability to specialty crop farmers.

The expansion of ECO extends availability to over 50 crops, including recent additions such as blueberries, almonds, walnuts, grapes, apples, grapefruit, lemons, tangelos, oranges, and mandarins/tangerines. This expansion is the result of collaborative efforts between Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs), producer groups, agents, and developers, all of whom appreciate the value of providing farmers with better service and better choices.

ECO remains committed to its primary objective to support American farmers by providing a safety net that kicks in when losses exceed the reach of traditional coverage options. By strengthening the crop insurance industry with additional coverage tailored to producers' needs, ECO aims to ensure that even in challenging years, farmers can recover and protect their livelihood.



YOU ASKED. WE LISTENED.

Quick Wins for Enhanced Perennial Processing

We are thrilled to unveil significant improvements to our perennial processing system! Last year, our NAU Country Marketing Representatives and Underwriting team highlighted that processing perennial business in our EASYwriter Pro® system could be smoother. Committed to addressing these concerns, our IT team organized Focus Group sessions with branches and high-processing perennial agents across the nation, including both virtual and in-person meetings from coast to coast.

Understanding that perennial needs vary regionally, we took great care to listen and address the specific concerns raised. After analyzing the feedback, we found that many requested features were already available but not widely known or utilized. To remedy this, we focused on providing targeted training and implementing several "Quick Wins" to simplify complex areas and enhance user-friendliness.

To make sure that we are prioritizing our initiatives correctly, we meet regularly with our internal focus group to review planned changes, demo enhancements, and gather additional feedback. Our experienced NAU Country Underwriters assist in the testing of the enhancements to ensure we are making quality updates. This process has been collaborative and agile as we continue to receive additional feedback.

Here's a snapshot of the enhancements:

- **"Copy from Another Policy" Feature:** Users can now easily copy Pre-Acceptance Worksheet (PAW) data between policies.
- **ROE Request Link in Policy Editor:** ROE (Regional Office Exception) Request numbers now display and link to the ROE Request Details screen.
- **Inspection Links in Policy Editor:** Inspection numbers now link to the View Inspections screen for easier access.
- **Temporary Yield Logic Update:** Logic has been implemented for Temporary Yields to auto-populate the Annual Yield column when a "J" Yield Type is keyed into the Types column. This logic will vary for Actual Revenue History (ARH) policies and will not auto-populate Annual Yields if a value already exists in that column.
- **High Variability Yield Report Enhancements:** New default columns including Status, Resolved, Letter Sent, and Comments have been added to the Perennial High Variability Yield Report.
- **APH Database Document Update:** A new "USC" field has been added to list the Unit Structure Code separately from the "Options" section where it previously appeared.



- **Push After Harvest Tracking:** A “Push After Harvest” checkbox/column was added to the PAW screen to allow for better tracking of blocks that may be pushed after harvest. When utilized, this will also be indicated on the corresponding PAW documentation.
- **Leaf Year Column:** Added to the Perennial Block area and the Weighted Average Detail screen.
- **NLF/R Block Visibility:** Easier identification of “No Longer Farming/Removed” blocks with color squares and updated acre totals.
- **Column Chooser:** Users can now customize the Perennial Block area display by selecting or deselecting columns.
- **Insurability Options:** New options to mark all blocks in a unit as Insurable or Uninsurable all at once.
- **Coverage Properties Checkbox:** Agents can now edit the “Direct Market/Vertically Integrated” checkbox in the Coverage window. This will prompt warnings for missing production records.
- **Weighted Average Detail Summary:** Available in the APH section, displaying essential details like Set Out Year and T-Yield.
- **Keying Acreage Signature Date:** New options are now available to apply a signature date to all units in a coverage or for a crop/county in Tree-Based Dollar Amount of Insurance plans.
- **Monthly Unit Value Plan (MUVP) Report Keying:** For Nursery Value Select (NVS) policies, the ability to key and print MUVP report details within EASYwriter Pro.
- **Document Consistency:** The PAW and PAW Documents will now be printed in the same block order per unit.

NAU Country extends a big thank you to our branches and agents who participated in the focus groups. Your feedback is invaluable, and we hope these changes enhance your experience. Special thanks to VP of Strategic Initiatives Lucas Graunke, Lead Technology Field Services Adam Flynn, Senior Business Quality Analyst April Wells, and Senior Business Analyst Stacey Stidham for their facilitation of focus groups with our stakeholders. Additional thanks to our underwriting team for their expertise and role in testing these features. Finally, our Perennial Project team - Angie Hagen, Paul Frank, April Wells, Jill Inman, Michael Erickson, Stacey Stidham, Nancy Connelly, Emily Larsen, and Aurelio Rama - for their dedication to analyzing, developing, testing, and managing these updates.

Stay tuned for more improvements! We’re continuously analyzing further enhancements to our Perennial Systems. If you have additional ideas, please reach out to your NAU Country Marketing Representative.

For more details on the recently released items, check out the links below:

- <https://www.naucountry.com/agent/it-product-updates/august-7-it-product-update>
- <https://www.naucountry.com/agent/it-product-updates/may-29-it-product-update>
- <https://www.naucountry.com/agent/it-product-updates/february-7-it-product-update>
- <https://www.naucountry.com/agent/it-product-updates/february-21-it-product-update>

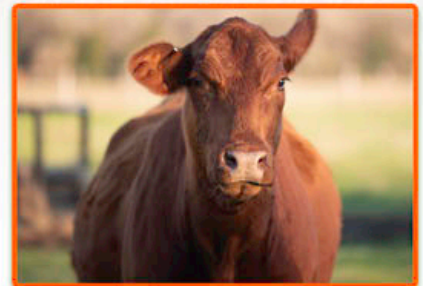


2025 PHOTO CALENDAR CONTEST

We are gathering photos from the farm and ranch in preparation for our 2025 NAU Country Photo Calendar! NAU Country takes pride in our mission of supporting the American farmer through risk management. Celebrate the American farmer by sharing your snapshots of planting season, stunning sunrises and sunsets, farm animals at play, or the diligent work of harvesting. Help us showcase the beauty and resilience of the American farming community. Make sure to review the contest rules and photo requirements. Then, submit your farm and ranch photos through Thursday, September 5, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. (CDT) to ITMarketing@naucountry.com for a chance to have them featured in our upcoming calendar. If they meet the required size and theme criteria, we'll enter them into the contest on our [Facebook page](#), where you can vote for the cover picture! This contest is open to Agents, Farmers, Ranchers, Producers, NAU Country Employees, and Friends. We want to see your captivating farm-related photos!

We look forward to seeing your submissions in the 2025 NAU Country Photo Calendar! Learn more at <https://www.naucountry.com/about-us/news/news-detail/2024/08/06/2025-nau-country-photo-calendar-contest>

**Please be assured, participants will never be asked to register or provide financial information to claim a prize.*



2024 COMPLIANCE TEAM

Conference



NAU Country's growing Compliance Department currently consists of 44 fast-paced individuals striving to protect the integrity of the Federal Crop Insurance Program while providing excellent customer service to our valued agents and producers across the country.

Compliance team members met in San Antonio, TX, from January 29-31, 2024, for its biennial conference. SVP, Compliance & General Counsel Doug Jakway welcomed several new team members and congratulated those celebrating notable anniversaries, including a few employees who have been with NAU Country for 15 years! Doug expressed his gratitude to the team for getting through another extremely busy year. He shared his insight regarding the critical role compliance serves for the company.

The team was greeted Monday evening at a short welcome reception and then they enjoyed a small group dinner with their district. Most compliance staff are spread across the country, so it is rare but vital for them to engage face-to-face with their managers and team.

Over the next two days, compliance managers and several team members presented training on Prevented Planting, SBIs, articles of incorporation, leases, and Crop-Hail reviews. NAU Country's compliance team strives for consistency with their processes and procedures. They also received updates made to the department Compliance Manual and information regarding reporting risks and TPEP (Training Performance and Evaluation Plan). In addition, the team picked up helpful tips and tricks for using Review Manager, communicating effectively, and setting meaningful goals for the year.

A fun app-led scavenger hunt got everyone outdoors for a quick-moving foot tour Tuesday evening, covering 2.5 miles of the city as teams worked together navigating the streets and the famous San Antonio Riverwalk to be the first to locate various sites - like the Alamo! - and answer trivia questions.

Although the department meets monthly online, everyone expressed how much they enjoyed this time together and look forward to meeting in person again in 2026.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Agent Danny Greene and his wife, Amy, recently returned home from the Dominican Republic on a mission trip along with 18 others from his home church (Victory Christian Church) located in Franklin, IN. The group traveled to an impoverished area in the mountains north of Bisono. Once there, they assisted in building a new home for a couple in the area known to serve their community through day labor on local farms, as well as cooking and washing clothes for their neighbors. On day one, the group and local community members tore down the old shack and cut materials. They poured concrete on the second day. By day three, they put up walls and a roof, and on day four, doors, shutters, trim, and electricity were completed. The group spent a total of eight days in the Dominican Republic between July 20-27, 2024.

Danny brought along a handy NAU Country water bottle given to him by VP, Farm Services Rich Morrison, after being recruited to join NAU Country. He noted that the group filled their water bottles from a clean source they brought along and that he drank nearly two gallons of water a day while they worked in the hot and humid conditions! Danny reflected on the trip, stating, "We (in the USA) have so many opportunities and benefits. It was great to give back, even for one week. If you have ever considered participating in a mission trip - do it!"

To learn more about the mission plan, visit <https://victorycc.life/missions>.

Danny is an agent and owner of Greene Crop Consulting, Inc., in Franklin, IN, and Brittany Cormany is his NAU Country Marketing Representative.

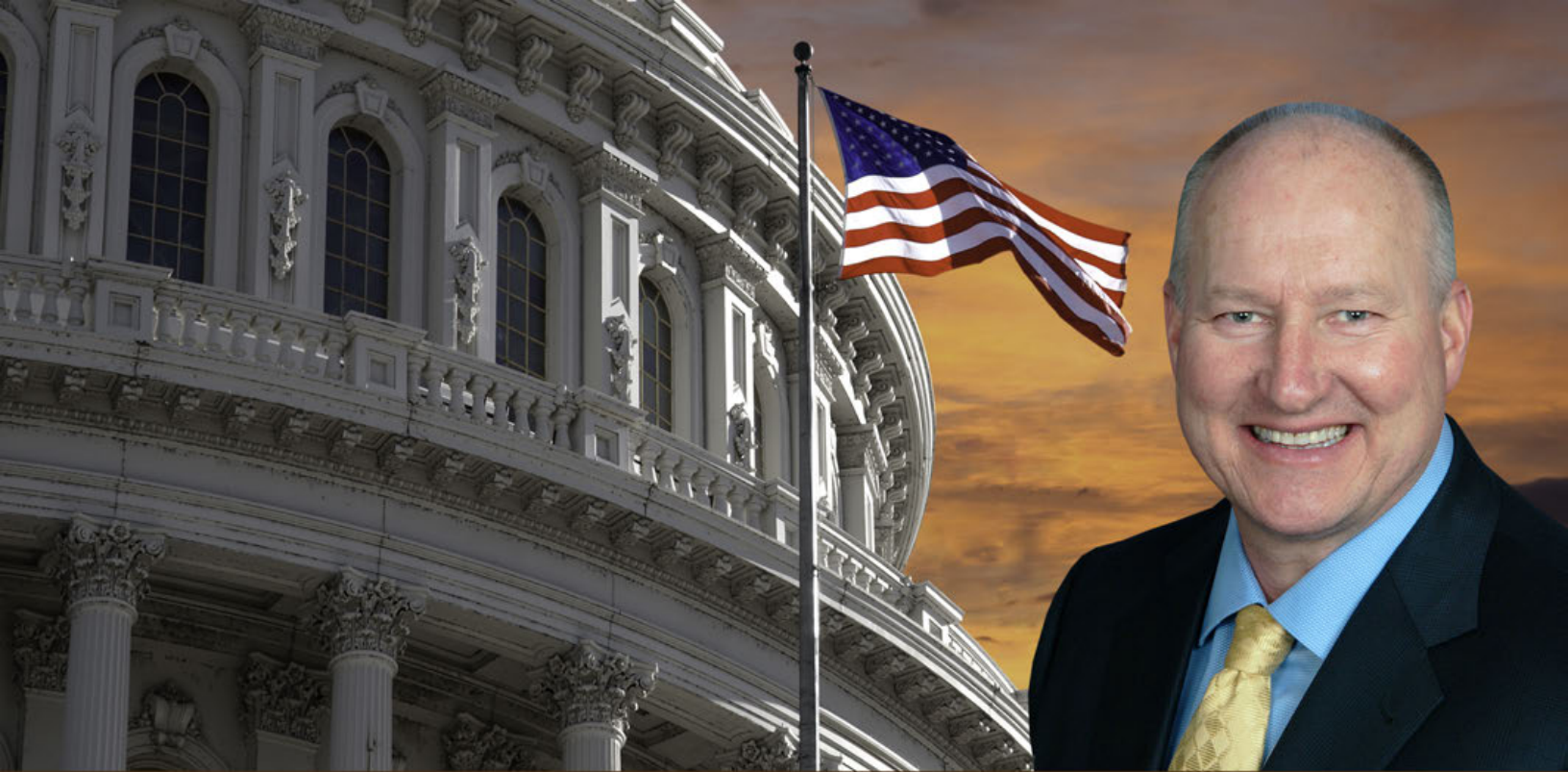


SUSTAINABILITY WITH

Solar!

In early 2023, the NAU Country corporate office in Ramsey, MN, powered up an entire solar paneled roof! NAU Country and our parent company, QBE Insurance Group Limited (QBE), are committed to creating a more resilient future. Sustainability is a crucial part of QBE's values and is integrated into every aspect of business. This commitment to our customers and the environment drove the switch to solar. A local company, Cedar Creek Energy, installed 351 solar panels. The solar panels should help avoid nearly 262,000 lbs. of annual CO₂ emissions output and are projected to produce 170,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity. This equals close to a quarter of the Ramsey office's electricity needs and saves nearly \$11k a year in operating costs.





Original publish date: May 25, 2023 | NAU Country President Jim Korin Highlights Importance of Crop Insurance Industry in Testimony to U.S. Senate Committee | Source: <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/nau-country-president-jim-korin-highlights-importance-of-crop-insurance-industry-in-testimony-to-us-senate-committee-301834659.html>

NAU Country President Jim Korin Highlights Importance of Crop Insurance Industry in Testimony to U.S. Senate Committee

NAU Country Insurance Company's President, Jim Korin, delivered a compelling testimony on the significance of the crop insurance industry to the United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry-Subcommittee on Commodities, Risk Management, and Trade's recent hearing.

In his testimony, Korin highlighted the historical roots of NAU Country, tracing back to the inception of crop insurance and its partnership between the Federal Government, the private sector and the American farmer. Today, Federal crop insurance covers approximately 135 crops, spanning nearly 400 million acres of production agriculture across the United States. In addition to protecting farmers against financial losses caused by various threats that can adversely affect crops, it plays a vital role for the American people by maintaining price stability in the agricultural sector, promoting food security, strengthening rural economies and reducing reliance on government aid. With the support of multiple competing companies, independent agents and thousands of employees, crop insurance covers over 90% of production agriculture in America.

"Crop insurance is a crucial risk management tool for farmers, and it has been successful due to its public-private partnership and support from Congress," said Korin. "It continues to evolve to meet new agricultural challenges and provide farmers and ranchers with the tools they need to succeed."

Korin emphasized three key principles in his testimony that underpin the success of crop insurance: flexibility, affordability, and availability.

- **Flexibility:** Farmers have the ability to tailor coverage to their unique operational and risk management needs, with options ranging from individual-field to whole-farm to county-based coverage. Plans offering coverage from 50% up to 95% ensure that crop insurance is accessible to farmers of all sizes and financial situations.
- **Affordability:** Crop insurance contributes to maintaining a safe and affordable food supply, ensuring that farmers are equipped with a safety net to navigate adverse growing seasons. The partnership between the private sector and the government, sharing risk and providing premium support, allows farmers to afford the coverage they require. This mutually beneficial arrangement also offsets costs to taxpayers, enabling the expansion and sustainability of crop insurance.
- **Availability:** The private sector's involvement in the delivery of crop insurance is vital for its continued success. Companies like NAU Country invest billions of dollars in rural communities, contracting agents, expanding technologies, and assuming significant capital risks. These investments provide coverage that supports the nation's producers, making funds available promptly when claims are made.



"Crop insurance is a crucial risk management tool for farmers, and it has been successful due to its public-private partnership and support from Congress." - NAU Country President Jim Korin

While crop insurance has proven effective, Korin also identified areas for improvement, including:

- **Enhanced Coverages:** NAU Country and other industry participants are actively collaborating with producers and commodity groups to enhance and expand coverage options for crops that safeguard the future of production agriculture. Initiatives like the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) policy and the Hurricane Insurance Protection-Wind Index (HIP-WI) endorsement have already shown promise in providing additional coverage during natural disasters. Making these policies more affordable will further strengthen their effectiveness and reduce the need for ad hoc assistance.
- **Refinement of Processes:** Continued refinement of the 508(h) process, which allows for innovative offerings in crop insurance, can enhance the delivery and effectiveness of the program. Collaborative efforts with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) aim to streamline the timing of new policies coming to market and improve the development of new 508(h) products, ultimately reducing costs and increasing market uptake.
- **Administrative Reimbursements:** The crop insurance industry has operated on stagnant administrative reimbursements since 2015 while experiencing significant wage inflation and cost increases. The industry supports a simple inflationary adjustment to ensure equitable relief and benefit program delivery for all farmers.
- **Environmental Practices:** American farmers have already adopted various environmentally friendly practices, such as no-till farming, cover crops, variable-rate fertilizer and chemical application, and the use of

cleaner-burning tractors. Farmers purchasing crop insurance must certify compliance with land management practices for highly erodible lands and wetlands, administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). While further adoption of carbon-sequestering farming practices is seen as beneficial, it is cautioned that non-market incentives should come from separately funded initiatives to avoid detracting from the crop insurance program. Crop insurance is considered vital to the survival of farmers and ranchers, as they can only implement such practices if they remain in business.

- **Actuarial Soundness:** Changes that exclude individuals from eligibility would undermine the actuarial soundness of the program. Crop insurance's effectiveness relies on the diversity of the risk pool, including farmers and ranchers of all sizes from every county in the country. Diluting the risk pool could increase premiums for those who remain eligible.

About NAU Country - Federal Crop Insurance Provider
NAU Country's founding family's rich history started in the 1980s when Jim Deal helped initiate the successful partnership between the government and the private sector. As the company grew from a small business to an industry leader, it gained a strong parent company in QBE. The financial strength of QBE in a global market adds economic stability to local efforts. Today, NAU Country continues to provide financial security for our nation's farming communities. Additional information can be found at naucountry.com or on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).



How Weather-Related Losses Forced Farmers and Crop Insurance to Adapt

Since 1980, the U.S. has sustained 373 separate weather and climate disasters where overall costs reached or exceeded \$1 billion, according to data released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The total cost of these events exceeded \$2.6 trillion with costs for 2023 events estimated to have exceeded \$73.8 billion.

"Recent climate extremes and weather events have had a significant impact on the crop insurance market as a whole," says Michael Deal, executive vice president, chief operation officer, NAU Country Insurance Company, a QBE Insurance Company. "Also, the increased frequency of these events has in turn led to an increased demand for labor and resources - there is not one aspect of our business that hasn't been affected."

Success within the farming industry depends on many things, but most significantly, it rests on climate. Extreme weather has been impacting the agricultural industry for years with crop insurance providing support for many of the losses experienced.

"Prominent examples where crop insurance coverage came into play include the extreme drought in the southern Plains in 2011, coupled with flooding along

the Missouri River; the 2012 drought; the 2019 excessive moisture conditions resulting in farmer-prevented planting losses; the 2020 Midwest derecho; hurricane losses in the Southeast in 2020; and drought in the northern Plains in 2021," says Dave DeCapp, senior vice president, marketing, Farmers Mutual Hail Insurance.

Between 2001 and 2022, the Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIP) sent farmers over \$161.6 billion in payments for all causes of loss, with weather-related claims representing 73% of total payments, according to a report released by the Environmental Working Group. Payments made to farmers in 2022 were largely concentrated in 10 states and covered mostly four commodity crops including corn, soybeans, wheat, and cotton.

However, "common trends being observed in the market include the overall increase in claims activity due to program expansion, changes in weather and policyholder buying patterns," Deal says. "The demand for program expansion and improvement has seen a rise, with a particular focus on shallow losses and subsidy rates."

“Recent climate extremes and weather events have had a significant impact on the crop insurance market as a whole,”
- COO Michael Deal,
NAU Country Insurance Company



Over the past number of years, “crop insurance has become the cornerstone of the farm safety net and provides farmers with access to an affordable risk management tool,” DeCapp says. As the producer landscape continues to change, it is important for agents to recognize that the makeup of the market is evolving and the value of specialty crops protected by crop insurance has tripled, according to a report by the Economic Research Service (ERS) at the USDA.

The good news is when it comes to participating in crop insurance risk mitigation, it is at an “all-time high, resulting in over 90% of insurable acres being insured, which proves farmers are utilizing the program to mitigate such risk and weather events,” says Joe Kirksey, regional director of crop insurance, Gallagher. “Farmers are also purchasing higher levels of coverage on their policy, which is a necessity to the rising input cost and diminishing profit margins. It is due to the crop insurance program that farmers are able to share this risk by purchasing a policy and ultimately, be able to withstand a disaster to farm another year.”

Agents play a key role in ensuring farmers understand and acquire the coverage they need, particularly as the number of adverse climate events continue to rise. It’s important to understand that some states that are not known for being in weather-related hotspots may now experience such losses.

For this, Deal offers two tips to ensure agents stay up to date on the coverage available for their clients:

- 1) Time: Devote as much time as possible to the policyholder’s needs. The complexity of the program and the evolving needs and concerns of our farmers must be given the proper attention and evaluation.**
- 2) Education: The industry offers an exemplary amount of continuing education. Attend meetings and training courses in your area and glean as much information as possible. For an agent, knowledge and reliability are everything in this business—and there are a lot of resources out here to support them.**

In a world where farmers are facing adverse weather that is increasing in intensity and frequency, “the federal crop program has also evolved over time to accommodate the integration of conservation programs and farmer initiatives to incorporate climate-smart farming practices,” DeCapp says. “The guidelines for program participation, based on good farming practices, have also evolved over time.” Keeping abreast of this evolution will ensure agents are adding value to their client relationships.



NAU Country President Jim Korin provided commentary to Insurance Business Magazine last year on how crop insurance and farmers may have been impacted by the recent Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) crisis.

Original publish date: June 15, 2023 | Insurance Business | How the SVB banking crisis created exposures for American farmers, and what's the link to crop insurance? | By Gia Snape | Source: <https://www.insurancebusinessmag.com/us/news/breaking-news/how-the-svb-banking-crisis-created-exposures-for-american-farmers-449428.aspx>

How the SVB banking crisis created exposures for American farmers

How the SVB banking crisis created exposures for American farmers, and what's the link to crop insurance?

The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank this year increased risks for technology startups and companies across corporate America, particularly those with large portfolios of investment securities.

Hundreds of miles away from California, farmers in rural America were also hit hard as their community banks were shaken by the banking crisis that ensued.

That's according to Jim Korin (pictured), president of NAU Country Insurance Company, a federal crop insurance provider under QBE Insurance.

Korin spoke about the banking crisis and its impact on farmers' financing to US senators at a recent subcommittee hearing, advocating for improvements to the federal crop insurance program in response to farmers' increasing exposures.

"Crop insurance is a crucial risk management tool for farmers, and it has been successful due to its public-private partnership and support from Congress," he said.

My hope is that my testimony provides support for continuing the program and expanding the assistance that government can provide to the coverages in the program. If that happens, our farmers are going to have a better safety net."

How were farmers impacted by the SVB banking crisis?

One way the banking crisis affected farmers was by way of agricultural start-ups. According to Korin, SVB provided financing for agricultural tech firms, and following the bank's collapse, some of those start-ups couldn't move forward.

"If [a bank] is financing somebody that might do business in the commodity space, and that bank goes down, they tie up a lot of money that these companies use to make their business work," Korin told Insurance Business.

After SVB crashed, spooked investors pulled money out of several banks en masse, causing more banks to fail. The crisis that followed sent shockwaves to small community banks in rural areas, impacting farmers that rely on those institutions for financing.



"Without crop insurance, many rural communities wouldn't exist the way they do. In my area, there's a co-op, restaurants, a hardware store... but without farmers in those towns, none of those stores would exist."

- NAU Country President Jim Korin

"When the public sees these bank failures happening, they tend to take their money out of the smaller community banks and move it to the bigger banks, such as the JP Morgans," Korin said.

"Those community banks are very, very important to rural America. They provide funding for operating loans for equipment, loans for land purchase, and so on. When these community banks lose capital because people are fleeing the banking system, that creates real chaos."

Boosting the federal crop insurance program

Federal crop insurance covers around 90% of production agriculture in the US, according to NAU Country. This includes some 135 crops and nearly 400 million acres of agricultural land. The remaining coverage is provided by private companies.

The hearing for the subcommittee on commodities, risk management, and trade, under the Senate committee on agriculture, nutrition, and forestry, was in aid of a new farm legislation this year. In his testimony, Korin emphasized the importance of crop insurance and financing for American farmers.

"The hearing [centered on] what we could do to make it better for the American farmer. There was a lot of talk about community financing and what farmers need to make ends meet," Korin said.

In addition to protecting farmers against financial losses, Korin testified that crop insurance plays a vital role in maintaining price stability in the agricultural sector, promoting food security, strengthening rural economies, and reducing reliance on government aid.

And while crop insurance is a key lifeline for farmers, farmers are the lifeblood of many rural communities and other businesses that operate within them, the NAU Country president set out.

"Without crop insurance, many rural communities wouldn't exist the way they do. In my area, there's a co-op, restaurants, a hardware store... but without farmers in those towns, none of those stores would exist.

"Crop insurance makes sure the farmer can farm. They can go to the bank and ask for an operating loan of say, \$1 million, and if their crop fails for any reason, they have crop insurance as a backstop."



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Paying your NAU Country crop insurance premium billing statement has never been easier! Simply scan the QR Code located on the bottom of your premium billing statement with your SMARTphone or tablet to be directed to our NAU Country ePay site. Fill in the applicable information, and your payment will be processed without needing to register for a Farmer Account!

That's not all! If you are not comfortable with scanning, another **NEW** easy way to pay is by navigating to www.naucountry.com and selecting the "Pay My Bill" option in the webpage's top right-hand corner. This will allow entry of your Statement #, Account #, and Current Amount Due. Once the system recognizes your account, you will be directed to our NAU Country ePay site for a quick and easy payment entry.

SO MANY WAYS TO PAY!

NAU Country thrives on offering solutions that best fit your style. In addition to the options above, we also provide premium billing payments by phone, through the mail, or online through your Farmer Account! Check out the convenient options below!

- **Paying by Phone** consists of two options! Please note that NAU Country does not accept credit card payments for either option.
 - Utilize our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) feature to pay your bill via phone. The system will guide you through the steps for a successful payment from your checking or savings account.
 - Call 1.866.350.7603 and have your billing statement account number available.
 - Payments must be made by 11 p.m. CT to be postmarked the same day.
 - Call us! We can take payment via phone if you prefer to speak to an NAU Country Representative.
 - Contact NAU Country's Accounting Department at 1.763.486.1711 or Toll Free at 1.800.942.6557 ext. 1711.
 - This service is only available during business hours.
- **Online Bill Pay** consists of two options! You must have a Farmer Account!
 - **Enroll** = Conveniently pay your monthly statement or set up a future payment in our *Online Pay* system.
 - **One-Time Payment** = Submit a payment for the current billing statement online.
- **Pay by Mail** involves detaching the payment coupon at the bottom of your recent statement and including your premium payment in the provided envelope.

PAPERLESS BILLING

Cut the Clutter! NAU Country has a convenient and clutter-free solution with Paperless Billing Statements. Paperless billing eliminates extra paper mail while also helping the environment. By going paperless, you will receive a billing notification via email and can access your statement by utilizing our free online Farmer Portal. Talk to your NAU Country Agent about this option today!

NEED HELP OR MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any additional questions, please contact the Accounting Department.

NAU Country Accounting Department:
Toll Free: 1.800.942.6557 ext. 1711
Email: accounting@naucountry.com

NAU Country's Chief Operation Officer (COO) Mick Deal spoke with Independent Agent magazine about how specialty crops are changing the crop insurance industry.

SPECIALTY CROPS AND THE CHANGING CROP INSURANCE LANDSCAPE

Between 1990 and 2022, liabilities for insured specialty crops rose from \$1 billion to more than \$23 billion, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Over the past 20 years, the number of individual specialty crops insured under crop insurance programs increased by 27%, with over 100 individual specialty crops currently insured under crop insurance programs.

In 2022, the Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIP) supported about 1.2 million policies that covered 493 million acres and cost the federal government \$17.3 billion, according to USDA. Through the FCIP, the government program ensures the country's farmers have insurance coverage available to them from private sector insurers to help mitigate potential financial consequences of adverse growing and market conditions. Crop insurance, for which farmers collectively pay between \$3.5 billion and \$4 billion a year, provides insurance coverage for most field crops, specialty crops and livestock.

U.S. corn accounts for 40% of the world's production, according to data from the USDA. However, while U.S. farmers plant about 90 million acres of corn each year on average, rising demand for organic specialty crops has encouraged more farmers to diversify by increasing the acreage devoted to them.

This change in landscape led the USDA to beef up crop insurance options for specialty-crop and organic producers. In October 2023, the USDA announced it was expanding the insurance coverage options available for specialty-crop and organic producers to improve insurance options and risk management tools.

Specialty crops grown in the U.S. include kiwis, almonds, grapes and pomegranates, with organic fruits and vegetables now the largest organic retail sales food category, surpassing \$22 billion in 2022 and making up about 36% of all organic retail sales, according to the Organic Trade Association. These crops are now included in the expanded crop coverage options.

"The government's expansion of crop insurance programs has been welcomed and the additional offerings are seen as positive on all sides," says Michael Deal, executive vice president, chief operations officer, NAU Country Insurance Company, a QBE Insurance Company. "The market is always eager for smart program expansion, and specialty producers are starting to see the coverage they need to sustain their farming operations."

Further, the FCIP "allows for every eligible grower to participate through Approved Insurance Provider (AIP) - appointed agents and is a cost-effective risk management tool for most farmers," says Dave DeCapp, senior vice president, marketing, Farmers Mutual Hail Insurance. "This distribution model allows for a greater spread of risk, and availability continues to expand. It remains a valuable and successful program to protect agriculture industries and, in turn, food security."

Recognizing the shift in consumer tastes, "the USDA has been very willing to listen and respond to the needs of specialty producers, and the impact can be realized from all sides," Deal says.

Crop insurance in 2024 "is a customizable tool that allows America's farmers and

"The government's expansion of crop insurance programs has been welcomed and the additional offerings are seen as positive on all sides."

Michael Deal
EVP, Chief Operation Officer
NAU Country

ranchers to create a risk management plan tailored to their needs," DeCapp says. "That means growers can be covered if they grow row crops, such as corn or soybeans, or more than 130 other types of crops, such as chili peppers or sunflowers; if they farm conventional or organic; if they are part of a large or small farming operation; and if they farm in Alaska or Florida or anywhere in between."

Crop insurance is classified in two categories: multi-peril crop insurance and crop-hail insurance. However, this has been evolving as under the Biden Administration, "the Whole Farm policy has been a main focal point and significant enhancements have occurred to broaden specialty crop coverages," says Joe Kirksey, regional director of crop insurance, Gallagher.

Overall, successive administrations have increased farmer protections. "In recent years, the federal crop insurance program has seen more inclusive growth: it has increased availability for additional crops, expanded to more geographic areas, and has a wider selection of products and services, such as Whole Farm, P.A.C.E., Livestock, and Dairy, to meet the needs of more farmers and ranchers in America," DeCapp says.



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