



Farm Bill & Crop Insurance — The Negotiation Begins

The nation has been without a farm bill for too long. Part of the farm bill is crop insurance and what happens with crop insurance impacts farmers and farms, the insurance industry and independent PIA member agents who sell crop insurance.

This week 41 negotiators from the House and the Senate Agriculture Committees will hunker down and see if they can come up with a compromise that will give the nation — and the farming industry — a farm bill.

Both the House and the Senate have passed versions of a 2013 Farm Bill. They are pretty much the same except for a couple of sticking points: crop insurance increases for the wealthiest farmers and food stamps.

Most controversial is the proposal in the Senate to make the nation's wealthiest growers — those making over \$750,000 in adjusted gross income a year — pay more for their insurance.

Critics say these farmers will then go elsewhere and smaller farmers will end up paying higher rates. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas opposes this part of the Senate's bill.

On food stamps, Republicans in the House want eligibility rules tightened for food stamps and say their plan will save the nation — and the taxpayer — \$39 billion in a 10-year period. The cuts wanted by the House are 10-fold more than those asked for by the Senate.

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition thinks in the end the conference committee will whack \$8 billion to \$12 billion out of the program.