



Risk Management Agency

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The Risk Management Agency Announces New Director of Spokane Regional Office

SPOKANE, Wash., August 22, 2014 – The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) today announced Ben Thiel has been appointed to the position of director of the Spokane Regional Office (serving Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington).

Mr. Thiel has worked for USDA for more than 12 years. He began his career with USDA at the Farm Service Agency (FSA), applying his background as a manager and merchandizer in the grain elevator industry. Mr. Thiel represented FSA as a warehouse examiner and compliance officer overseeing warehouses storing cotton, grains, peanuts, sugar, and processed commodities under the authority of the United States Warehouse Act and storage agreements for the Commodity Credit Corporation.

For the past six years, Mr. Thiel has worked for RMA in RMA’s Product Management Office as a risk management specialist in the Policy Administration Branch overseeing area-based insurance plans, canola, forage, malting barley, onions, and all small grains. He developed and implemented an insurance pricing structure based on contract prices for specialty-type crops and further refined this structure with the development of the Contract Price Addendum, which provides the ability for most organic crops to be insured at a contract price. Mr. Thiel also helped implement several privately submitted 508(h) products and many of the new crop insurance changes enacted by the Agricultural Act of 2014.

Mr. Thiel grew up on a family farm that produced alfalfa, malting barley, and potatoes west of Idaho Falls, Idaho. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Idaho State University.

As director of RMA’s Spokane Regional Office, Mr. Thiel will oversee all aspects of the federal crop insurance program for Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, working closely with growers, grower groups, other USDA agencies, community based organizations, and approved insurance providers.

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