



*U. S. Department of Justice*

# *News Release*

*Thomas G. Walker*

**United States Attorney**  
*Eastern District of North Carolina*

*Terry Sanford Federal Building  
310 New Bern Avenue  
Suite 800  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-1461*

*Telephone (919) 856-4530*

**Criminal FAX (919)  
856-4487**

*Civil FAX (919) 856-4821  
www.usdoj.gov/usao/nce*

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**CONTACT: Don Connelly**  
**PIO**  
**(919) 856-4172**

**WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA, CROP INSURANCE ADJUSTER SENTENCED**

**RALEIGH** - United States Attorney Thomas G. Walker announced that in federal court today Chief United States District Judge James C. Dever III, sentenced **JIMMY THOMAS SASSER**, 61, to 48 months imprisonment followed by 3 years supervised release. Restitution of \$21,045,917 was also imposed. The sentence reflected a reduction for **SASSER'S** cooperation in the on-going investigation. **SASSER** has been on house arrest since November 21, 2011, when he was arrested on a criminal complaint for threatening a witness.

U.S. Attorney Thomas G. Walker stated, "Today's sentence reflects the harm committed on our community as a result of this massive multi-million dollar fraud scheme and should serve as a deterrent for adjusters who are contemplating taking pay-offs to help farmers and agents file false claims."

On January 23, 2012, a three-count Criminal Information was filed charging **SASSER** with conspiring to make false statements, to make material false statements, and to commit mail and wire fraud, all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371; wire fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343; and retaliating against a witness, victim, or informant, and attempting to do so, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1513. On February 21, 2012, **SASSER** pled guilty to the charges.

According to the Criminal Information and information provided in open court, **SASSER**, a crop insurance adjuster for Rural Community Insurance Services (RCIS), received cash pay-offs from 1996 through 2007 to falsify claims regarding the scope of damage or the farmer's true tobacco production on a particular acreage.

The scheme consisted of adjusters, including **SASSER**, who would submit a false assessment of loss on a Proof of Loss form which was mailed or wired to the insurance company. The co-conspiring insurance agent would collect pay-offs for the inflated loss adjustments from the co-conspiring farms and would share the monies with the adjusters, including **SASSER**.

During the course of the investigation, **SASSER** lied to federal law enforcement officers. **SASSER** also sent a letter to the North Carolina Department of Insurance in November 2010,

falsely denying having received money from Robert Carl Stokes. Stokes, an insurance agent from Wilson, North Carolina, previously pled guilty to charges in connection with the on-going crop insurance fraud investigation.

The Criminal Information further states that on November 19, 2011, **SASSER** threatened to cause bodily injury to two other people, one of whom was a cooperating defendant, in retaliation for giving information regarding the conspiracy to law enforcement officers.

"Adjusters play an important role when adjusting claims for producers. The sentencing of an insurance adjuster in this case should serve as a strong deterrent to those who chose to commit fraud against the federal crop insurance program and will help protect the integrity of this program by ensuring that taxpayer dollars are safeguarded," stated Karen Citizen-Wilcox, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Southeast Region, USDA-OIG-Investigations.

Special Agent in Charge Jeannine A. Hammett, IRS-Criminal Investigation stated, "This criminal enterprise reaped thousands of dollars in profits by engaging in insurance fraud and money laundering. IRS-Criminal Investigation will zealously pursue individuals involved in such blatant and far-reaching criminal activity."

Investigation of this case was conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Office of Inspector General - Investigations, USDA - Risk Management Agency - Special Investigations Branch, and the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Banumathi Rangarajan is prosecuting the case.

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