BULLETIN NO: MGR-05-012

TO: All Reinsured Companies
        All Risk Management Agency Field Offices
        All Other Interested Parties

FROM: Ross J. Davidson, Jr. */s/ Ross J. Davidson, Jr.*   *9/1/2005*
        Administrator

SUBJECT: Good Farming Practice (GFP) Decisions, Determinations, and Reconsiderations Regarding Emerging Crop Diseases-Asian Soybean Rust (ASR)

BACKGROUND:

On June 10, 2005, the Risk Management Agency issued Managers Bulletin No. MGR-05-010 (MGR-05-010) to provide guidelines for determining or affirming whether or not a good farming practice (GFP) was used in the production of insured crops. In the last paragraph under Background of the aforementioned bulletin, it was stated that the bulletin did not apply to emerging disease issues and that RMA will issue specific instructions identifying the emerging crop disease and the GFP procedures that will apply.

This bulletin, MGR-05-012 provides those instructions for the emerging crop disease Asian Soybean Rust (ASR).

RMA acknowledges that ASR is such a newly emerging disease in the U.S. that agronomists are still evaluating its potential impact on the U.S. soybean crop and effective treatments. Due to the lack of experience in the U.S. with this disease, agricultural experts may not always be in total agreement as to the best treatment (appropriate chemicals, amount, timing and number of applications, etc.).

USDA has implemented a National Soybean Rust Map on its Website www.usda.gov/soybeanrust to track the spread of ASR. The USDA National Soybean Rust Map also provides commentaries for each State regarding ASR observations, Soybean growth stages, and ASR management, which includes recommendations for fungicide applications, Forecast Outlook, Scouting Recommendations and Scouting Techniques. When the State Update Map is selected, a click on the State will provide the above referenced commentaries and guidance. In some cases, advice on the use of fungicides may also be provided. This advice or other opinions of qualified agricultural experts and published materials referred to in (MGR-05-010), may be used to prove that a farmer used GFPs in treating ASR.

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ACTION:

I.   Until RMA determines, after consultation with the Cooperative State research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), the Animal Plant Health Inspection service (APHIS) and other applicable parties, that agricultural experts have reached consensus on appropriate treatment for ASR in the U.S., AIPs are authorized to accept the opinion or recommendation regarding the proper agronomic practices to use to combat ASR of any person or contained in any published materials that meet the definition of agricultural expert in the Basic Provisions or MGR-05-010 as supporting evidence that a GFP has been used by the producer. This may be done even if such opinion, recommendation or published materials later prove to be incorrect, in dispute, or in conflict with other opinions, recommendation or published materials of qualified agricultural experts.

II. As ASR becomes better understood and more information is obtained, a consensus on what constitutes GFPs for ASR is likely to develop. Once a consensus develops among agricultural experts, as determined by consultation with CSREES, APHIS and other appropriate parties, RMA will notify interested parties that determinations of GFPs regarding ASR will be made under RMA's general procedures regarding GFP.

III. All other requirements of MGR-05-010 not in conflict with this bulletin will be applicable to GFP determinations for ASR, including the provisions regarding GFP determinations from RMA, and reconsideration of any GFP determination issued by RMA.

DISPOSAL DATE:

This Bulletin is for the purpose of transmitting information and will expire when rescinded.