



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural  
Services

Farm Service  
Agency

1400 Independence  
Ave, SW  
Stop-0517  
Washington, DC  
20250-0517

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

**FROM:** Ross J. Davidson, Jr.  
Administrator  
Risk Management Agency

James R. Little  
Administrator

MAY 14 2005

**SUBJECT:** Major Joint Effort

We are pleased to announce a major joint effort between the Risk Management Agency (RMA) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in the development of the Common Component of the Comprehensive Information Management System (CIMS). The Department of Agriculture (USDA) is currently working on other components of CIMS to ensure the creation of an information management system that can be used to implement and administer the programs of RMA and FSA. This project is designed to identify common and unique producer and crop information reported to both agencies and to reduce the reporting burdens of farmers, ranchers, producers, RMA, FSA, and crop insurance providers. The Common Component of the CIMS project will improve the efficiencies of data exchange between RMA, FSA, and crop insurance providers. Producers submit over three million acreage reports to RMA, through crop insurance providers, and FSA annually. One of the many savings that the Common Component of CIMS is envisioned to bring is the reduction of duplicate acreage information reported under both programs.

The CIMS is being developed to address the requirement in section 10706(b) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, which states: *"The Secretary shall ensure that all current information of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and the Farm Service Agency is combined, reconciled, redefined, and reformatted in such a manner so that the agencies can use the common information management system developed under this subsection."*

The scope of the project includes four components of core information: (1) producers (entities) and shares; (2) farm, field, and unit identifiers; (3) crops and acreage; and (4) production information required by both agencies. CIMS will interface with approved crop insurance providers, RMA, FSA, and other applicable USDA agencies' systems applications collecting and reporting this common information. CIMS will allow RMA, FSA, other USDA agencies, as appropriate, and crop insurance providers to share this common information reported by producers consistent with USDA security procedures, the Freedom of Information Act, and applicable regulations.

Ross J. Davidson, Jr.  
James R. Little  
Page 2

A contract was awarded by USDA to Tarleton State University to assist in the development of the Common Component of CIMS. The first step in implementing the project has been to identify common and unique producer and crop information in the RMA and FSA programs. Information that can be readily reformatted or redefined will receive such treatment to create common information. Next, a mechanism will be developed to share the common information with producers, insurance providers, and USDA agencies. The final step will be application development compatible with future programs and processes. It is recognized that some program differences exist between RMA and FSA programs. To the extent that such program rules differ, allowances will be maintained to account for the differences. In areas where the rules are similar, efficiencies should be possible through the elimination of redundancies. In areas where the rules are different, changes will be made to the maximum extent practicable to create additional common information.

Teams have been formed to address each of the four components of core information. The teams consist of personnel from RMA, FSA, USDA, and crop insurance providers. Cooperative efforts on the project are vitally important in order to achieve the goals that benefit mutual customers. The coordinated efforts of USDA, RMA, FSA, and crop insurance providers on the Common Component of the CIMS project, along with the sharing of common information, will further emphasize and enhance how efficient and diligent all parties can serve the Nation's farmers and ranchers.

Additional information regarding the Common Component of the CIMS project may be obtained by e-mailing [USDA.CIMSProject@rma.usda.gov](mailto:USDA.CIMSProject@rma.usda.gov). You may also contact the RMA coordinator, Seavey Anthony, at (816) 926-3865 or the FSA coordinator, Diane Sharp, at (202) 720-7641 for this project.