



In the Field

AWARD-WINNING SERVICE

When it came time for Adam Vetter to choose a career, it may be more accurate to say that the career chose him.

“This was my destiny—or maybe my curse,” Adam says with a laugh. “My father, Tom, and my grandfather, Joe, both spent their entire careers in crop insurance. I went to college at West Texas A&M intending to get a degree in agriculture, and started working as a per diem claims adjuster just to have some money. Low and behold, here I am 15 years later.”

Adam continued to work as a claims adjuster after graduation until joining AMS Insurance, Casa Grande, AZ, in 2003 as a partner. The agency was formed in 1995 and offers primarily crop and farm and ranch insurance. “We write multi-peril and crop hail insurance throughout the Southwest—Arizona, New Mexico, California, Colorado, and Texas,” Adam says.

All about the people

On this particular day, Adam is in his car headed to visit some of their policyholders—and he’s pretty excited about it.

“It’s great to get out on the road and see some guys in the field,” he says. “This is a service business first and foremost. To do our job well, we have to know the business, know our products, and give our customers great service. It may sound cliché, but I love this business and I’m truly happy to be serving those working in the ag industry.”

Adam’s passion for service has not gone unnoticed. He was recognized at this year’s National Crop Insurance Services (NCIS) convention, receiving the Outstanding Service Award given each year to an agent in recognition for “outstanding service and outreach to small, limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers.”

“We write a lot of insurance for Native American tribal lands, so we work with the reservations and the people who farm that land,” Adam explains. “It’s an honor to receive this award out of all the folks nationwide who were eligible.”

Though every year brings with it unique challenges, Adam looks forward to the future and what he sees as an increasingly important role for crop insurance.

“The way I see the USDA and farming in general heading, federal crop insurance is going to be the safety net,” he concludes. “I believe AMS is well positioned to handle whatever comes from all the current legislative discussions. Jeffrey Altfillisch, who founded AMS, has put together a fantastic staff, and we have excellent resources like ProAg. We’re ready for tomorrow’s challenges.”

Editor’s note: Tom Vetter, Adam’s father, is the national crop hail coordinator for ProAg. 🍀



THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF AGRICULTURAL RISK MANAGEMENT®

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INTRODUCING PROAGWORKS™ SOFTWARE

CROP INSURANCE PROCESSING SOFTWARE BUILT FOR YOU

PROAGWORKS™

By RICHARD STINSON, OPERATIONS PROJECT MANAGER

Our business demands a lot from all of us. High business volumes, tight deadlines, and the complexities of ever-changing insurance options push us, at times, to our limits. Our policyholders count on us for data integrity, processing efficiency, and prompt, accurate settlements. Your policy processing system plays an integral part in your ability to deliver on those expectations.

You deserve a system you can count on to support the great work you do. Now you have one—ProAgWorks™ software.

Built on a field-tested platform and developed to precisely meet the needs of agents, company personnel, and policyholders, ProAgWorks is intuitive, responsive, and powerful. It will enable you to do what you do best more productively.

Let me highlight just a few of the benefits of ProAgWorks that I believe you'll appreciate.

- **INTERNET-BASED**

ProAgWorks software is an Internet-based program. That means that no applications need to be installed on your hardware. Better yet, it means you can access the system from anywhere, just by using your browser.

- **STREAMLINED LOGIN**

Your login will now follow you through the system, eliminating the need for multiple logins. User security is also enhanced.

- **UP-FRONT EDIT FLAGS**

Simple errors, such as too many digits in a phone number, are automatically flagged on the entry screen for easy correction. We are introducing a new Mark Complete process, initiated during policy processing, at which time the system checks entries for accuracy. RMA error resolution issues are reduced and less time is spent correcting simple data-entry errors.

- **DASHBOARD**

The dashboard view available to agents and employees identifies suspensions to be worked, streamlines workflow, and provides an area for notifications and announcements corresponding to the login role.

- **TRANSACTIONAL LOGGING**

The transaction log provides a list of prior transactions by user, helping to eliminate discrepancies on reports. It is a tool that identifies change made to the policy.

- **PRINTING FLEXIBILITY**

Agents and employees have the option to batch print forms or print policy documents. Flexible printing makes the system easy to use, eliminates the need to be in multiple systems, and provides the option to print what you desire—blank, pre-headed, or a pre-filled form.

Improved efficiency means more opportunity

The best feature of the ProAgWorks software is the overall efficiency it will bring to our entire workforce. By reducing manual workarounds, employees will be able to spend more time doing what they do best. That means we'll be able to handle more business. Not only that, but policies and claims will be processed with fewer FCIC errors and reduced mail and paper costs.

This article is just the first of many opportunities you will have to learn more about ProAgWorks software. We know that this has been a busy time for agents due to the volume of work associated with spring sales closing. Your ProAg marketing representative will be contacting you soon to present a short video update on the new system. Stay tuned for that and more as we roll out ProAgWorks. 🍅



MANAGING CHANGE, SMOOTHING TRANSITIONS

By KENDALL JONES, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

The move to the new ProAgWorks™ crop insurance processing software will naturally come with its own learning curve. That's the nature of software systems. But anyone who has been through a similar transition also knows there are also other unintended, but unavoidable, consequences. We build our processes around the capabilities of the software. As we switch to a new system, those processes change for everyone.

Our goal is to minimize the normal disruption and stress caused by the transition, and to that end, we've been putting a great deal of effort into change management. The importance of this to you is not the process, but the end result—a smoother path to productive implementation of ProAgWorks.

A good thing

The first thing I want to emphasize is that the process changes—that we foresee—should be positive for everyone, from the field to the back office. These changes won't eliminate work, but they will ultimately make our workflow more streamlined, our tasks more intuitive, and our efforts more productive.

There are a number of significant differences between ProAgWorks and our current system, and one of the first and foremost has to do with the way we will be introducing it. Because ProAgWorks is built on a stable and proven platform—and created from top to bottom to meet the specific needs of our agents, claims processors, and underwriters—we know how

the system works. Everything fits together from the start. That enabled us to create coherent communication, marketing, and implementation plans in advance of the launch.

From a management perspective, we've learned from past experience. We have the knowledge and tools now to develop clear action plans and communicate those plans to all levels of our organization—including our partners. We anticipate that this change will allow us to be both more disciplined and more responsive as an organization.

Timetable for change

The change management process will be implemented, based on need, over the course of a year or more starting this spring. We'll begin by evaluating the procedural changes that will be needed, determine the best way to communicate those changes, and prepare the documentation. The rollout of ProAgWorks will follow the crop cycle, and system training will be a component of the regular training program.

Through this process, we'll use change management to help build understanding of not only the ProAgWorks program, but its impact. It supplements system training and will increase the effectiveness of the system changes.

If you haven't read Richard's article on the preceding page yet, I would encourage you to do that. You'll get a better idea how ProAgWorks will benefit you. 🍀

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RAIN, WIND, OR HAIL, OUR PEOPLE COME THROUGH

BY BILL HAAR, FRESNO REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

When I look around the country and see the weather events—from floods, wind, and hail in the Midwest, to drought in Texas and the Southwest—I have to say that we've done pretty well by comparison. Specifically, crop hail performed well in our region, particularly in the Pacific Northwest. That wasn't the story nationwide.

As is often the case when you're talking about a region as large—and as diverse in its crops—as ours, we didn't escape unscathed. Some citrus growers in California recorded 50 days this season when temperatures fell below freezing. This year, it was the mandarin orange crop that took the hit.

My point in all of this is simple: No matter where you do business, what crops you insure, or what coverages you're dealing with, at some point every year, you'll be settling claims. This is where your organization sets itself apart or falls a step behind. Everyone has access

to the same products. We charge the same rates. The only difference between one organization and the next is the quality of our people.

We are fortunate to have two of the most experienced and knowledgeable crop hail people in the country in our region—Paul Lassey in Washington and Tom Vetter in Arizona. Tom, in fact, is the ProAg national crop hail coordinator. Both have a very positive influence on crop hail insurance on the West Coast, and are tremendous resources for our staff and our agents.

In Tom's case, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, as his son, Adam, is making quite an impact as an Arizona crop insurance agent. You can read about him on the front page if you haven't already.

So thanks to all of you—agents, adjusters, claims processors, and underwriters—for doing what you do so well. As the face of the company, you are ProAg to the farmers and ranchers we insure. 🍏

