In the Field

Two Secrets to Success

Our force in the field, supported by our team in the office, has always set ProAg apart from others in the crop insurance business. Once again, we would like to shine the spotlight on two of the team members that make the ProAg difference.

Cathy Pennaz

As is the case for many ProAg employees, crop insurance wasn’t Cathy’s first career target. “I went to school for fashion merchandising but ended up working as a florist for 10 years on and off while raising my boys,” she explains. “I was working at Wells Fargo in 2011 when I decided to apply for a job at RCIS, and thus began my adventure in crop insurance.”

Cathy joined ProAg in 2015 as the northern region’s crop hail underwriter and says the move has been a good one for her. “I love my co-workers. They’re always there with a kind word and a smile. What I most enjoy about my job is the variety of people I get to interact with every day. I love when I can take care of something for an agent and they send me an email with, ‘Thank you. That was fast!’ or ‘You’re the best!’ It makes my day. This is a nice place to work, and your work here doesn’t go unappreciated.”

An appreciation for farmers and the work they do also increases Cathy’s job satisfaction. “I grew up spending my summers on my older cousins’ farms, so I know the hard work and sacrifice that goes into that lifestyle,” she says. “I enjoy knowing that I am helping those producers.”

Away from work, road trips are a favorite pursuit for Cathy and her husband of 25 years, Bob. Some of those miles are put on visiting their sons Zach, who was married last April, and Jake, who’s a student at the University of Minnesota. You might also want to ask Cathy about the days when she used to work as a part-time karaoke host.

Chris Westrom

Talk about well-rounded—and well-traveled. Chris spent 14 years in the military as a scout sniper before embarking on a long career in the dental industry. Then, in 2014 he went to work as a certified chemical applicator and turf grass specialist. How did he come to ProAg?

“I was introduced to the industry by a friend,” Chris says. “I really enjoy the customer contact and the challenges of the industry. I feel like working at ProAg is like working in a family business. Everyone is so helpful and willing to jump in if I need assistance. Teamwork is a vital part of the job, and I feel there is a lot of that here.”

Chris finds his job most satisfying when he can solve an issue for an agent or an insured. “I think I have a tenacity to find answers, and I take seriously my obligation to serve our customers to the best of my ability,” he states.

On his days off, Chris and his fiancée enjoy outdoor activities, specifically camping, bicycling, grilling and, not surprisingly, the gun range. He has three adult children and three grandchildren.

ProAg is an equal opportunity provider. A member of the Tokio Marine HCC group of companies.
It can be hard to get your mind headed in the right direction when there is still snow on the ground in the Corn Belt, but it’s not too early to start thinking about crop hail coverage. Missy Waters, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Services states, “At ProAg, we believe in offering crop hail and named peril coverage that can be tailored to your individual risk management needs. Our goal is to protect your risk without breaking your budget.”

One change to note is the addition of a basic wind coverage endorsement in some states. The basic coverage has no deductible and joins our 5%- and 10%-deductible endorsement options.

**Enhanced ICE policy**
Last year we introduced our Increased Coverage Election product (ICE). At that time, our only option was to add price to the MCPI projected price. In 2018, an insured can now choose from five coverage bands in ICE to complement the MPIC coverage levels. The bands can be either yield-only or revenue-only.

Talk with your account rep for all the specifics on ProAg’s lineup of named peril products, including crop hail, ICE and RPowerD™.

- **NEATNESS COUNTS**
  Make sure the application is written legibly and that each section is filled out completely.

- **KNOW YOUR LIMITS**
  Follow the underwriting limits that are listed in each state’s rates/rules manual. If these limits need to be exceeded, please follow up with your account rep to get approval for the increased coverage.

- **SPECIAL ORDERS**
  If there is a request for coverage on a crop not listed in the crop classification page of the state’s rates/rules manual (for example, watermelons) please follow up with your account rep to get approval.

- **ROLL WITH IT**
  Once the states are rolled to production, agents can set up a quote with all the coverage information to show the insured. It’s an easy step to convert from a quote to a policy when the insured is ready to sign the application.

- **DON’T SKIP**
  All underwriting questions—except for question #4—need to be answered. If the answer to any question is “yes,” please include an explanation.

- **DROP DEAD DATE**
  The application deadline date is 07/15/2018. Anything written after this date will need company approval.

**Think Hail, Named Peril Now**
By Barry Cermak, Product Development Manager
Enhancements Add Value to myProAg™

By Jaime Hageman, Customer Account Services Manager

Both agents and insureds will benefit from recent enhancements to the myProAg portal. “New tools in myProAg offer the convenience of completing and signing RMA-required forms online, making an agent’s life much simpler,” notes Terri Sell, ProAg Senior Vice President of Operations.

We’ve been really pleased with the response to the online payment option in myProAg. If your insureds aren’t yet using this feature, it’s easy to get them signed up and logged in.

We will continue to add features to myProAg. We expect direct deposit to be available this September. Grain market information will be appearing on the site in the near future. Agents will have better weather reports and tracking and insureds can sign up for notifications of weather events on their farm. These notifications will be policy driven and specific to their acres. Hail and excess precipitation will be the first notifications to roll out, with high- and low-temperature coming down the line.

Insureds can sign up for myProAg through our website, proag.com, or by going directly to the myProAg website, my.proag.com.

FOR MORE INFO

To find out more about this exciting tool and its new features, see ProAg.com/myProAg or contact your ProAg Account Rep.

The Long Run

An excerpt from a feature in the February 2018 Crop Insurance Today magazine

By Tom Zacharias, National Crop Insurance Services President

There is no denying that crop insurance has worked well since the 2014 Farm Bill was signed into law. Congressional Budget Office projections for crop insurance are down nearly $10 billion since the bill was enacted—in other words, we are coming in under budget. Farmers have stepped up to help fund their own safety net, spending nearly $15 billion in premiums and shouldering more than $30 billion in deductibles since 2014.

Despite its success and popularity, U.S. farm policy and crop insurance in particular have their share of critics and opponents. Their goal is to make crop insurance less affordable by capping premium discounts; less available by attacking revenue coverage and excluding some farmers with an arbitrary income means test; and less economically viable for the private sector by reducing rate-of-return targets.

Our industry has successfully defended itself from similar attacks in the past, because we have effectively communicated the necessity to keep crop insurance affordable, available and viable. We will “have the opportunity” to continue to do so in the future.

In closing, I believe it is fair to say that our industry is in this business for the “long run.” The investment by our industry to provide the necessary infrastructure, along with the partnership with the Federal government, is a testament to the long run commitment to serving the risk management needs of the American Farmer.
It goes without saying that these are challenging times for crop insurance agents. Risk management has never been more important for the producers we all serve, and crop insurance is a critical part of a sound risk management plan.

At the same time, producers are looking at every possible way to minimize expenses. While they realize its importance, crop insurance is one more area they are taking a careful look at. As an agent, you’re working to keep costs in line, while providing them with the best possible coverage to protect their operation and satisfy their lenders.

Certainly, a solid base of MPCI coverage is the best place to start. Then there is an array of named-peril products—including crop hail—that can provide cost-effective extended coverage to better manage risk in specific situations. The problem is, not all named-peril products are the same, even when they seem similar. This is where ProAg can help.

Our powerful quoting tools make your job easier. We also provide detailed, easy-to-understand materials on all our named-peril products. Our best resource, however, is our team of account representatives. They study and train to learn our products inside and out. They also spend time learning what other providers offer, so they can highlight the differences.

ProAg is proud to offer a strong selection of named-peril products, and we’re always working to expand and improve what we offer. Our ICE product is just one example. Formerly, this product provided yield coverage only, but now provides both yield and revenue coverage options.

Let our account representatives help you find the right products to help your insureds best manage their risks and their bottom line.