

WSR Insurance Services: Personalized crop insurance

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**
For the Capital Press

WSR Insurance Services began in 1917 with the merger of three independent insurance companies.

More than a century later, WSR is still jointly owned and has become one of the largest independently owned insurance agencies in Northern California, offering a full range of products that include farm and ranch insurance for crops, livestock, apiculture, personal insurance and general business needs.

They are also sponsoring the seminar program that will be offered at the brand-new Central Oregon Ag Show.

WSR is based in Woodland, Calif., with 13 agents scattered around multiple states that include several regions where ranching is the primary industry. The website is wsrins.com.

“We like to conduct our business face-to-face,” Matt Griffith, co-owner, said. “With what we do it’s important to sit down with a customer so everybody has a good understanding of what we’re doing together and enabling us to set realistic expectations of how our products can perform.”

Bobby Alexander, with a background in the livestock industry, manages WSR’s crop insurance products, specializing in the risk management tools put out through USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) that include pasture, rangeland and forage (PRF) and livestock risk protection (LRP) tools for ranchers and hay producers geared to protect their



Bobby Alexander

bottom line.

“Most ranchers have considerable expense in raising their cattle,” Alexander said. “LRP lets them lock in a price to insure against declining market prices.”

PRF insurance allows farmers and ranchers to insure the amount of rainfall they’re supposed to get in their area and offset costs when water is scarce.

“Everybody is looking for all they can do to manage risk and make ends meet,” Alexander said. “When you are in an inconsistent weather pattern, people can end up having to sell their herd down or make big adjustments.

“They’re also very vulnerable in a fluctuating market,” Alexander said. “If something happens globally, even if it has nothing to do with the cattle industry, it can tip their market upside down and ranchers can end up getting less out of their cattle than it costs to raise them.”

Two of WSR’s five owners, Griffith and Jim Vann, grew up in the



Matt Griffith

ranching industry and understand the perils that operators face and want to make sure they know there is help available that they may not know about.

“The lines the USDA offers change quickly with new products popping up on an annual basis, and there are a couple that are being overlooked, such as whole farm revenue, which protects an operation’s income based on what commodities they have and their size,” Griffith said.

“Agriculture is unique in that the producer doesn’t set the price; we’re at the market’s mercy when it’s time to sell our commodities,” he said. “We’re trying to relay the message that there are products to help you stay in business and that’s a new mindset because up until 10 years ago crop insurance at the ranching level didn’t really exist.

“Many of our products have been of real benefit to the Central Oregon agriculture community and we are happy to spread the word by participating in the new Ag Show.”



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