

**CROP INSURANCE UNDER FIRE** With the clock ticking on the Farm Bill negotiations and the contentious situation between Food Stamps and Crop Insurance in the House of Representatives, you may have seen some recent articles attacking the Crop Insurance program as “corporate welfare” and “subsidies for the wealthy.” Bloomberg News(?) probably gained the most visibility after publishing a two-part series on the subject. (*Then again, what do you expect from a company owned by a guy who wants to take away your salt and soda pop?*) The Bloomberg articles, which present many facts and figures out of context, seemingly all for the sake of painting the crop insurance program and its success in a bad light, complain that, “the arrangement is a good deal for everyone but taxpayers.” We beg to differ. As Dr. G. Art Barnaby pointed out at this week’s MN Crop Insurance Conference in Mankato, the real cost to taxpayers of the crop insurance program over the last 12 years has averaged about \$5.3 billion per year. And that includes 2012, one of the worst drought years and the worst year on record for the crop insurance program and there were NO calls for ad hoc disaster payments from Congress. 2012 is evidence that the crop insurance program works. Crop insurance allows farm producers to plan for the future and transfer risk and continue to provide a consistent, relatively inexpensive (compared to the rest of the world) food supply. Yeah, the farm economy is doing well right now. And, so are the companies that supply the seed, fertilizer, equipment and pickup trucks and the companies and agencies that insure them. What is a healthy rural economy really worth to all of us?