

[Farmers Insurance Ordered to Pay Woodward Tornado Victims \\$15M](#)

Property Casualty 360

Shelly Hobbie walks through the rubble left of her son's mobile home in Woodward, Okla. on April 15, 2012. (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki)An Oklahoma judge has ordered Farmers Insurance and a subsidiary to pay a total of \$15 million to three plaintiffs who filed property claims resulting from an EF-3 tornado that struck Woodward, Okla. in 2012, killing six people and injuring 29. Plaintiffs Sterling Parks, Jeff and Mary Sharpe, and Kim and Linda Louthan alleged that Los Angeles, Calif.-based Farmers Insurance Inc. and Foremost Insurance Group not only underpaid claims involving damage to their homes but also selected adjusters whom they believed "would offer low estimates." Jeff Marr, the attorney who filed the lawsuit in August 2012 on behalf of the homeowners, says the adjuster in the Parks' claim determined the home was not structurally damaged and therefore could be repaired, even though an engineer hired by Parks recommended the home be torn down. On Feb. 28, District Judge Ray Dean Linder sided with the three plaintiffs, holding Farmers Insurance and Foremost Insurance Group liable for a total of \$15 million in damages. Judge Linder awarded the plaintiffs \$2 million each for bad faith and breach of duty, as well as \$3 million each in punitive damages. Additionally, the state district judge awarded \$49,278.26 to Parks; \$224,202.82 to the Louthans; and \$245,967.58 to the Sharpes, all for breach of contract. When asked about the case, a spokesman for Farmers Insurance said the company is "still reviewing the judge's decision and evaluating [the] next step." BY CHRISTINA BRAMLET Source: The Oklahoman

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