

FACES OF



# Not Once, Twice, but Ongoing, Audits are Foundation for Continuous Improvement

Recertification required after three years helps keep retail facilities compliant, employees safe

**A**udit. The word can send shivers down the spine of the toughest facility manager. Safety audit. Another spine chiller. But for the J.R. Simplot Company, a ResponsibleAg member, audits completed by ResponsibleAg-credentialed auditors are positive events with many benefits for the organization.

Simplot locations began participating in the ResponsibleAg Certification Program in early 2015 after the initiative was introduced. More than 60 of Simplot's retail locations have now completed recertification. While the initial facility certification process is designed to help ag retailers ensure they are abiding by the many regulations governing their facilities, Simplot sees recertification after three years as a way to make continued compliance and improvement easier.

## Convenient, continuous effort ensures positive results

"We encourage our location managers to use the audit questions during the years between the initial and most recent certification to ensure the facility remains compliant," says John Pallen, Environmental Health and Safety Manager for Simplot.



**JOHN PALLEN**  
J.R. Simplot Company,  
Environmental  
Health and Safety  
Manager

Norman Etchegoin, Area Operations Manager for Simplot in California, echoes, "It's a good tool for us to use throughout the entire year. We take our full audit and split it up over 12 months, so we are consistently reviewing requirements. This gives us an extra set of eyes to make sure we are keeping up with all the things that have the potential to slip



As J.R. Simplot locations have gone through ResponsibleAg recertification audits, auditors have identified fewer areas for corrective action than during the initial audits.

through the cracks."

"By understanding the audit, we can be proactive in looking at situations and take corrective actions so there is not a huge expense when it comes to recertification," says Jim Cavallero, Operations Manager for Simplot. "Simplot has a safety culture. We always try to stay safe, work safe and do things safely. We use the initial audit to build a plan and process for continuous improvements so there are no surprises at recertification time."

**"We encourage our supervisors to use the initial audit as a guide for continuous improvement and to help prepare for recertification."**

– John Pallen, J.R. Simplot Company

## ResponsibleAg certification reassures agency inspectors, paves the way for better habits

Etchegoin credits the recertification process for keeping his facilities in good shape for other inspectors and regulatory agencies. "Recently a fire marshal inspected our facility," Etchegoin says. "He saw our ResponsibleAg certification and instantly knew our facility was going to be compliant."

Additionally, Etchegoin credits the ResponsibleAg certification program, and especially recertification, for significantly increasing safety awareness and hazard recognition at his facilities. "It's a good tool to use throughout the year. It gives us eyes on the entire plant and allows us to continuously improve our practices and processes," he states.

Cavallero agrees. "We want safety to be a good habit. We want it to become a mindset. We use the ResponsibleAg compliance assistance library as a source for safety and compliance training information that helps us ensure every employee understands how to work safely. This helps our team put forth a better product for our customers. We have fewer breakdowns, and customers know our employees are properly trained," he explains.

## Audits and recertification help ensure consistency across entire organization

From a corporate standpoint, Pallen points out that recertification audits allow Simplot to measure safety and compliance efforts. Because auditors ask the same set of questions at each audit, facility management can compare current audits with previous ones, measure progress,

identify corrective actions for recurrent findings, and set goals and targets for continuous improvement.

The bright spot in this process is that the organization is improving.



**NORMAN ETCHEGOIN**  
J.R. Simplot  
Company, Area  
Operations Manager  
for California

"As facilities have gone through recertification, we have seen fewer areas for corrective action than in the initial audits," states Pallen. "We have seen a decrease in physical findings. Most of our action items are more procedural in nature. ResponsibleAg helps us make sure our documentation, inspection and other record-keeping items are complete."



**JIM CAVALLERO**  
J.R. Simplot  
Company, Operations  
Supervisor

For Simplot, the ResponsibleAg audit process is more than worth the temporary anxiety that can come with the thought of a thorough inspection. "The process shows we have a commitment to safety, compliance and sustainability," Pallen says.

Both Etchegoin and Cavallero agree the recertification process gives them another tool in their toolbox. It demonstrates to employees and the community that Simplot is serious about safety and, as a responsible neighbor, is working to keep its employees, customers and communities safe.

ResponsibleAg is an industry-led initiative committed to helping agribusinesses ensure they are compliant with environmental, health, safety and security regulations to keep employees, customers and communities safe. It offers a systematic approach to facility evaluation, recommendations for improvements and a comprehensive collection of resources members can turn to for information and education.

To learn more about ResponsibleAg or to become a member visit [www.ResponsibleAg.com](http://www.ResponsibleAg.com) or call 270.683.6777.

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ResponsibleAg is an industry-led initiative **committed** to helping agribusinesses properly store and handle farm input supplies. The program helps members ensure they are **compliant** with environmental, health, safety and security regulations to keep employees, customers and our communities **safe**.

