

**Request for Proposal
For Personnel to Perform Verification Assessment
On Behalf Of The
ResponsibleAg Certification Program**

ResponsibleAg Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 2014 to promote the public welfare by assisting agribusinesses as they seek to comply with federal environmental, health, safety and security rules regarding the safe handling and storage of fertilizer products. The fertilizer industry is building upon its corporate social responsibility by promoting safe storage and handling practices, by supporting federal regulatory compliance by all retailers. The goal of ResponsibleAg is to improve the safety and security associated with the storage and handling of fertilizer products, support compliance with federal regulations while demonstrating accountability and transparency and providing for the safety of employees, customers and communities.

Approximately 3,500 facilities are expected to register in 2015 through 2018. The total number of potential facilities in the U.S. eligible to participate is estimated at 9,000 facilities.

ResponsibleAg has compiled a checklist of federal regulatory requirements applicable to the storage and handling of fertilizer. The checklist, developed by a technical committee comprised of industry regulatory professionals, contains more than 320 questions. Auditors credentialed under the ResponsibleAg Certification Program will use this checklist to assess compliance with federal regulations at each participating facility.

Participating facilities will receive an assessment by a credentialed ResponsibleAg auditor once every three years. Up to 17 areas of a facility are assessed by the auditor. (Examples of these areas are dry fertilizer, liquid fertilizer, anhydrous ammonia, shop, office and grounds, etc.) The auditor will enter their findings into the secure portal on the ResponsibleAg website within 24 hours of completing the assessment. After it is entered, the facility will receive a corrective action plan listing any issues that were discovered by the auditor.

Seven percent (7%) of all assessments performed by ResponsibleAg credentialed auditors will receive a verification audit for quality assurance purposes. Verification assessment must be performed by a contracted entity without potential bias or conflict of interest. Logic will be utilized to randomly select the facilities to receive verification assessment. Verification assessments will need to be performed within 90 days of the original assessment. It is anticipated a "milk-run" approach can be utilized to help control the amount of travel required to perform verification assessments. Additionally, it is anticipated a verification assessment will be performed in a timeframe of less than 3 hours, depending upon the size of the facility.

ResponsibleAg will provide verification auditors with a web-based assessment program, training and related printed materials designed to facilitate the verification assessment process.

The entity selected to perform verification assessment will report to the Program Manager of ResponsibleAg and will work closely with the Asmark Institute regarding administrative duties.

Specifically, fulfilling the duties related to performing verification assessments requires:

- Proven knowledge and experience with the Federal regulatory content of the ResponsibleAg assessment including general requirements related to OSHA, EPA, DOT, DHS, USDA, etc. Minimum ten years of experience is recommended.
- The ability to appropriately interact and relate to the personnel who own and/or operate the agricultural facilities registered under the ResponsibleAg Certification Program. An understanding of, and appreciation for, agriculture is a positive attribute for this contract.
- An adequate number of verification auditors, strategically located around the U.S. to perform verification assessments economically and within the specified 90 day timeframe.
- A high level of consistency in the form of the final product from all verification auditors. (Ideally, the number of auditors would purposely be as few as possible. Considerations to the number of auditors should be balanced between economical travel and consistency of the final work product.)
- Basic skills and competency in computers and Internet.
- Confirmation that corrective actions have been completed for certain "Significant Issues" requiring an on-site visit. (There are ten Significant Issues that have been identified by RA that must be addressed with priority before the facility can be certified. While all ten issues require confirmation corrective actions have been taken, four of the issues require an onsite visit by a verification auditor. These four issues will be built into the logic that randomly selects the facilities to receive a verification audit.)
- Time for training: Initially an amount of time commensurate to the verification auditor's level of knowledge and experience will be required to receive training and testing on the ResponsibleAg system. Consistency between all verification auditors will determine the amount of initial training and refresher training that is required.
- Time for establishing an effective verification/quality assurance program: Ideally the process and content of the verification audit would be developed cooperatively between the entity providing the verification audit services, the Technical Committee and the Asmark Institute, the entity responsible for administering and programming the ResponsibleAg Certification Program. Time should be allowed to develop an effective and efficient system as part of this proposal.
- Time for potential appeals/dispute resolution: Potentially there could be instances where the credentialed auditor doesn't agree with the results of the verification auditor. Should this occur, time should be allowed for this in the final proposal.
- Professional oral and written communication skills, motivated, organized and ability to work towards consistency within a team.

Compensation will be commensurate with talent and experience. The initial contract period will be for five years. ResponsibleAg has the option of contracting with more than one party to conduct verification assessments. Please submit a statement of qualifications detailing relevant experience in PDF format to proposal@responsibleag.org by April 30, 2015 to be considered. Please direct any questions that you may have regarding this Request for Proposal to Billy Pirkle, Chairman of ResponsibleAg, Inc.

Recommended resources to assist with preparing this Request For Proposal:

- www.responsibleag.org
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - ResponsibleAg Assessment (Checklist)
 - ResponsibleAg Video
 - ResponsibleAg Auditor Training & Credentialing Information
 - ResponsibleAg "Participant" Tools and Resources