



"The Responsible Ag Compliance Assistance Library summarizes regulations in laymen's terms, so the information is easy to understand, and it has concise summaries that can be printed as handouts." - Tom Wenning

Safety Training for Seasonal Help

Premier Ag turns to ResponsibleAg when training seasonal workers on safety and compliance practices

ach spring in farm country, "Help Wanted" signs go up and the call for workers hits the airwaves. As the busy production season looms, retailers and farmers search for seasonal help to lend a hand with nutrient application, planting and pest control.

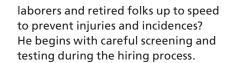
Increasingly, experienced help is hard to find. That's why careful screening during hiring and thorough training are job one for Tom Wenning, Operations Manager, and his team at Premier Ag in Salem and Corydon, Indiana.

"Seasonal help doubles our workforce each year," Wenning says. "The people we hire range from ages 18 to 70, and their experience in agriculture ranges from none to those who help us year after year. It is important we

invest the time and effort to ensure they're all up to speed on safety practices and daily checks required in their jobs."

Keeping seasonal employees safe begins with good choices

How does Wenning get his team of recent high school graduates, college students, overthe-road truckers, laid-off



"When we're hiring, we pair each applicant with an experienced employee who walks them through the responsibilities of the job they're interviewing for. Our full-time employees are all well trained using ResponsibleAg guidelines and know what is expected, so they explain things correctly.

"They cover best practices for equipment operation with the potential new hires," Wenning says. "We don't put employees in situations where they aren't comfortable. Those who will run forklifts must successfully operate the forklift, and truck drivers must take a road test."



TOM WENNING Operations Manager in Salem and Corydon, Indiana

Onboarding involves thorough training by experienced employees

Once employees are hired, they are trained on hazardous waste operations and emergency response to prepare them if anything would go wrong. On-thejob training continues, with a full-time employee showing the new hire how to do things correctly – from daily plant or equipment inspections to moving and stacking chemical totes and seed boxes.

Safety training doesn't stop once the work begins. Regularly, experienced and seasonal employees are trained on timely topics related to the work being done or conditions employees may encounter. Heat stress is a typical topic in July.

ResponsibleAg is resource for year-round training

Wenning and Jerry Boger, Safety Coordinator for Premier Ag, rely on ResponsibleAg for training resources such as the Compliance Assistance Library, which summarizes regulations in laymen's terms, making the information easier to understand. Wenning likes how easy the online system is to use whether training seasonal or year-round employees.

"ResponsibleAg covers the topics we need to consider for our specific

location. It's all there. The online resources are searchable and easy to use," Wenning says. "The information gives step-by-step guidelines for daily processes, like vehicle inspections, and it has concise summaries of regulatory standards that can be printed as handouts."

The primary goal of ResponsibleAg is helping facilities improve safety and security for employees, customers and communities. Knowledge of regulations and required safety practices is key to reaching that goal. Membership in ResponsibleAg gives facility manag-



Premier Ag is a division of Premier Companies, a farmer-owned cooperative founded in 1927 and headquartered in Seymour, Indiana.

ers access to a collection of tools they can use to teach employees safe practices and job responsibilities related to compliance with federal regulations. Some of the most applicable for employee training are the Compliance Assistance Library, EZ Search, industrystandard resources and links

to federal agency websites.

Awareness of required recordkeeping is another benefit of ResponsibleAg

Accurate and consistent recordkeeping is an integral part of many of the regulatory requirements from OSHA, DOT, DHS and EPA. Premier Ag joined ResponsibleAg in late 2016, and participation has not only improved safety practices, but also has made the team more aware of necessary recordkeeping.

"Especially in the spring, it's hard to get out of the office with the phone ringing constantly and lots to do," Wenning says. "My best advice is to make the time to do regular walk arounds of your facility.

"Stuff breaks. Things wear out. Do your regular inspections. Record the process on the required forms and write down what needs attention, so it's not forgotten. This is all important when you're accountable for keeping everyone at your facility safe," he says.

For more information or to join, visit www.ResponsibleAg.org 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.



