



Leaders of the Pack

Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association and ResponsibleAg leaders in safety

Leaders – by definition, is a person (or organization) with commanding authority or influence. This certainly describes the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association (IFCA).

It's no secret that IFCA is at the forefront of ag retail safety. Jean Payne, IFCA President, credits the forward-thinking leaders of the organization for paving the way in fertilizer industry safety. Formed in 1965 as the Anhydrous Ammonia Association, this group of commercial fertilizer pioneers had a vision for agriculture in Illinois and for the growing retail ag market.

"Over time we became the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association, representing all fertilizers and crop protection products, not just ammonia," Payne says. "The willingness to form the organization and lead the way says a lot about why we are here today."

But being a safety leader doesn't happen overnight. It takes commitment at every level to ensure the safety of ag retailers, workers and the public across the state.

Commitment is key to proper fertilizer handling

The second largest corn-producing state in the nation, Illinois uses nearly 650,000 tons of anhydrous ammonia annually.

"Our ag retailers share the public roadways with nurse tanks. We have ammonia facilities that are often in or on the edge of town. We have large storage tanks positioned throughout the state," Payne explains. "We have always been very conscious when it comes to the safety of that particular product. We must do the absolute best."



JEAN PAYNE
President, Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association

And being the best requires dedication and a commitment to excellence. The dynamic partnership of IFCA and ResponsibleAg has taken

retail ag safety in Illinois – home to the largest ResponsibleAg membership base – to a new level. ResponsibleAg's goal of ensuring proper handling and storage of farm input supplies to keep employees, communities and ag retailers safe aligns perfectly with IFCA's mission.

Payne reflects, "I believe ResponsibleAg was perfect timing. We've always had our own state programs to help with compliance, but the scale and scope of ResponsibleAg is a huge complement to anything that goes on at the state level because it's overarching and consistent."



IFCA promotes the safe use and handling of anhydrous ammonia and all fertilizers and crop protection products.



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IFCA and ResponsibleAg are a win-win for Illinois

IFCA has always been quick to adopt the latest safety advances in the ammonia industry.

Payne says, "Our members understand the reason is to protect not just today's use of that product, but future use by staying current and revisiting regulations that keep that product safe." It's what leaders do. It can be a daunting task; however, ResponsibleAg has made keeping on top of regulations much easier.

Payne explains, "One of the biggest challenges is when a member calls and asks us to send a list of all the regulations they need to know. It sounds like an easy task, but until ResponsibleAg came along, I'd never seen everything in one place." The ability for members to access all the information they need saves time and puts it at their fingertips.

Payne believes participating in ResponsibleAg allows IFCA members to demonstrate they care about what they do every day.

"ResponsibleAg is just another way to help provide a level of surety and confidence for facility owners," Payne says. The ResponsibleAg Certification Program gives an added boost to IFCA members as they look to remain leaders in safety.

Payne recalls that many IFCA members would ask for someone to come and "make sure we are doing things right." With limited manpower and resources, it was impossible to inspect nearly 750 member locations.

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"The ResponsibleAg program fills a huge void," Payne says. "IFCA was in as good a place as we could be helping provide regulatory compliance advice to our members, but we couldn't go out and physically look at what they had. ResponsibleAg has elevated compliance, by enabling inspection by a ResponsibleAg auditor and the ag retailer, to evaluate the details of the federal regulations."

"I believe commitment to their community and confidence they weren't forgetting something are probably the greatest insights our members have gained from ResponsibleAg," Payne says.

The legacy of safety from IFCA, paired with the surety of ResponsibleAg, makes Illinois a national leader in fertilizer safety. Theirs is an example worth following.

For more information or to sign up 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**.

