

FACES OF



ResponsibleAg Certification Helps Farmer and Agribusiness Owner

Being good neighbors is important to Willard Agri-Business

Billy Willard, CEO of Willard Agri-Service of Frederick, Inc., leads a successful agribusiness operation with five plants serving Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware and New Jersey. In addition, Billy manages the Willard family's 3200-acre farm that produces corn, wheat, soybeans and sorghum. Farming is in his blood.

Billy's great-great grandfather started farming in rural Montgomery County, Maryland, more than 150 years ago. His father, De Willard, began serving the agricultural community in 1948, when at age 16, he purchased a harvester to do custom work for local farmers. In 1970, Willard Agri-Service opened its Frederick,

Maryland, plant, one of the area's first liquid fertilizer manufacturing facilities.

Today, Montgomery County is the most populous county in Maryland with an estimated 1,052,567 residents in 2018. And it sits next door to the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. Though the county is no longer rural, modern agriculture is alive and well with businesses like Willard Ag conscientiously working to be good neighbors.

Being a good neighbor to urban centers and regulatory agencies

Some in agriculture might be nervous operating next door to urban neighbors and the home of agriculture's regulatory agencies, EPA, DOT, OSHA and DHS, but Billy Willard doesn't find it intimidating.

Willard Agri-Service began participating in ResponsibleAg in April 2015, and three of the company's locations are now ResponsibleAg certified. A fourth is expected to complete certification by the end of 2019, and the fifth location in 2020. An industry-led initiative, ResponsibleAg helps members ensure they are compliant



BILLY WILLARD
CEO
Willard Agri-Service

with environmental, health, safety and security regulations to keep employees, customers and communities safe. For Billy Willard, it's about more than compliance alone.

"I think participating in ResponsibleAg indicates that our company is committed and here to stay," Willard says. "It shows we're investing in doing things right, not just

trying to make the next quarter or the next month. We're looking down the road, three, five, ten years."

ResponsibleAg-certified retailers inspire farmer confidence

While Willard runs a highly successful agribusiness, he is still a farmer. From that perspective, knowing his ag retailer is a member of ResponsibleAg shows him the businesses' commitment to good business practices.

"I believe participating in ResponsibleAg reflects a business that is doing things right," Willard says. "It gives me confidence as a farmer that everything the retailer is doing in my fields and throughout the area, from fertilizer being on grade to proper product handling and application, is being done in the safest, most correct manner."



Willard Agri-Service's Frederick, Maryland, fertilizer facility is neighbors to more than 1 million residents of Montgomery County. The county sits next door to the nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

Additionally, Willard believes ResponsibleAg ensures that his farm and business are in harmony with the surrounding community. As a farmer, working closely with an ag retailer is natural, but urban neighbors who have no direct interaction with production agriculture need assurance that local businesses like Willard Agri-Service are following regulations that protect everyone.

"ResponsibleAg helps us showcase our efforts to safeguard everyone in the streets and in the communities – our employees, our customers and the environment." –Billy Willard

Billy Willard sees location in an urban area as an opportunity to tell agriculture's story.

"These are my neighbors," Willard explains. "We are near a major population center, so we're going to be continually scrutinized. However, it is an opportunity to tell our story, let them see what we do, how we do it, and how good we are at it."

"We must be responsible neighbors,"

Willard explains. "In terms of compliance, ResponsibleAg helps us showcase that we are going above and beyond just being safe. We are working to safeguard everyone on the streets and in the communities – our employees, our customers and the environment."

ResponsibleAg reduces risk and liability

Willard also believes ResponsibleAg membership and the audit process have helped reduce liability risks, both to his farm and his business.

"I have learned being proactive is always more cost effective than being reactive. When you become reactive in any situation, especially in our very populous area, it can be very costly," Willard says. "We'll invest up front to reduce our risk."

He adds, "I appreciate that ResponsibleAg auditors are tough. We want them to be thorough. When the auditor comes through and checks off whatever we need to work on and we get it fixed, we've reduced a risk."

By participating in ResponsibleAg, Billy Willard achieves the best of both worlds. ResponsibleAg is good for his farm and his agribusiness and gives his urban neighbors confidence that he has their safety in mind.

To learn more about the benefits of ResponsibleAg or to become a member visit www.ResponsibleAg.org or call 270.683.6777.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY



www.ResponsibleAg.org

@ResponsibleAg

MISSION

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**.



The Willard family farming operation produces corn, wheat, soybeans and sorghum in Maryland's most populated county.

