

FACES OF



Pandemic Perspective

Amid COVID-19 concerns, safety performance improves among members of the fertilizer industry

Starting any new job comes with its own share of unique challenges. Starting one just as a global pandemic grips the nation takes those challenges to an entirely new level.

That's the situation in which Corey Rosenbusch found himself in early 2020. Only a few weeks after taking the helm as president and CEO of The Fertilizer Institute — an organization based in Washington, D.C., that represents, promotes and protects the fertilizer industry — the world came to a grinding halt.

"I came on board in February and had about two weeks in the office before we went into a remote work environment," says Rosenbusch, who spent more than 14 years as president and CEO of the Global Cold Chain Alliance before joining TFI. "One of the most impressive things to me has been the way every single member company has prioritized safety, and that commitment existed long before COVID-19 hit. ResponsibleAg is a big part of that."

Launched in 2014, ResponsibleAg is an industry-led initiative committed to helping agribusinesses ensure compliance with environmental, health and safety (EHS) and security regulations to keep employees, customers and communities safe. The initiative offers a systematic approach to facility evaluation, recommendations for improvements and a comprehensive collection of resources members can turn to for information and education.



COREY ROSENBUSCH
President & CEO,
The Fertilizer
Institute

"ResponsibleAg is about more than safety for those working in an industry that directly supports more than 100,000 jobs and has an annual economic impact of more than \$130 billion. It's also about keeping our communities safe."

— Corey Rosenbusch



Safety data from TFI is proof positive of ResponsibleAg's impact across the fertilizer industry. TFI's 2019 State of the Industry report notes the lowest recorded lost-time incident rate since data collection began in 2013.

Lifelong safety lessons

For Rosenbusch, the importance of workplace safety was ingrained early in his life. He grew up in Texas, where his father was the high school agriculture science teacher and FFA adviser. Safety was paramount to every lesson.

"I would roll my eyes when my dad would spend the first half of the class doing a safety briefing before we went out into the shop," Rosenbusch recalls. "Whether it was woodworking or welding, safety was always the key lesson. Today, I have such a different appreciation for that lesson and why it's so important."

Statistics prove industry is improving safety

The impact of the ResponsibleAg program across the fertilizer

industry is evident in the safety data that TFI collects, Rosenbusch says. In its 2019 State of the Industry report, TFI reported the lowest recorded lost-time incident rate across the fertilizer supply chain since data collection began in 2013.

"Safety performance among participating TFI member companies also continued to outperform our industry peers when compared to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics," Rosenbusch adds. "Programs like ResponsibleAg help drive the safety culture and accountability that leads to these results."

While COVID-19 did curtail Rosenbusch's travel early in 2020, by October he was able to attend his first ResponsibleAg board meeting held at the Ford B. West Center for Responsible Agriculture in Owensboro, Kentucky. Seeing the one-of-a-kind training center in person helped bring other statistics alive for TFI's new CEO.

"ResponsibleAg is about more than safety for those working in an industry that directly supports more than 100,000 jobs and has an annual economic impact of more than \$130 billion," Rosenbusch says. "It's also about keeping our communities safe. As a fertilizer industry, our 2019 study showed that we provided nearly 800 hours of emergency response to almost 14,000 people outside our organization."

While more than 2,500 retail facilities are now registered for ResponsibleAg

and more than 3,000 safety audits have been completed, Rosenbusch says he sees huge potential for expansion of the program.

"There's tremendous opportunity for growth, especially among third parties that work with fertilizer manufacturers," he says. "For example, third-party warehousing companies might not be considered a direct part of the industry, but they handle a significant amount of product on behalf of our members."

Rosenbusch notes that while COVID-19 has provided challenges, it has also heightened the ResponsibleAg-inspired focus on workplace safety. He says many TFI member companies have seen safety performance improvements during the last eight to nine months.

"Safety is a foundational pillar in the culture of many of our member companies. When you focus on keeping your workers safe through a pandemic, there becomes an even greater awareness of safety in general," he says. "No matter the size, I've seen companies make equal commitments and investments in safety as part of their cultures and business operations. You hear it in their pre-meeting safety briefings. You see it in their materials. You hear it in their language. Participating in ResponsibleAg is one more way these companies are making safety a priority."

To learn more about ResponsibleAg, visit www.ResponsibleAg.org or call 270.683.6777.



While COVID-19 curtailed Rosenbusch's travel early in 2020, he was able to attend his first ResponsibleAg board meeting at the Ford B. West Center for Responsible Agriculture in October. Rosenbusch is pictured with Amber Duke, ResponsibleAg Communications Committee member and President and CEO of Asmark Institute.

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**.

