

FACES OF



Reflecting on Accomplishments, Vision for the Future



As of July 2021, there were approximately 2,450 locations participating in ResponsibleAg and 1,250 facilities that are ResponsibleAg certified.

Industry Leader's Passion for Success of Ag Retail Industry Includes Focus on Compliance

You know when a person is passionate about something — you hear it in their voice and see it in their eyes. They jump in full force to further their cause. Anyone who knows Tim McArdle, retired COO of Brandt and longtime board member of ResponsibleAg, can't mistake his passion for the agricultural retail industry and the importance of safety and compliance with federal regulations. "Being in compliance to ensure safety is one of the most important, but among the toughest, responsibilities ag retailers have," says McArdle, who is completing his three-year term as Chairman of the Board and his volunteer service to ResponsibleAg since its beginning in 2013.



Participation in ResponsibleAg is an inexpensive way for companies to address compliance issues head on and make sure their Environmental, Health and Safety programs are working, according to McArdle.

Safe practices protect communities, industry

A passion for safety has driven McArdle's support for the ResponsibleAg initiative since the beginning and is why he believes it delivers tremendous benefits to the industry. "Ag retail operations are near where customers, employees and their families live, work and go to school. By improving safety at our facilities and ensuring their regulatory compliance through ResponsibleAg certification, we protect our communities and put our industry in a good light."

ResponsibleAg certification verifies that ag retail facilities are compliant with the pertinent regulations from OSHA, DOT, EPA and DHS that apply. The road to certification for a registered facility begins with an audit by a ResponsibleAg-credentialed auditor who identifies issues of non-compliance. The facility then receives a corrective action plan detailing how to resolve the issues. Once that's done, the facility achieves ResponsibleAg certification, which is good for three years.

While the program fosters safer employees and communities, the value of the industry's self-regulation efforts shouldn't be understated. "Third-party verified audit and certification programs are key in showing regulators that the ag retail industry places high importance on compliance and is capable of self-regulating," says McArdle. "Certification also can help prevent more regulations from coming down on the industry unnecessarily in the future, and that benefits us all."

One source for current regulatory details

McArdle touts ResponsibleAg as a single resource for the latest details on federal regulations that apply to the ag retail and crop inputs industry.

"Our first goal is to ensure we provide an up-to-date audit

checklist," says McArdle. "That's critical because any time the administration in Washington changes, regardless of party, the potential for new leadership at the regulatory agencies increases, which often means possible new regulations or changes to existing regulations."

The ResponsibleAg technical committee, consisting of industry regulatory professionals, closely monitors and updates the checklist to reflect recent regulatory changes. Online resources, like the audit assessment checklist and Compliance Assistance Library, are available to help registered facilities comply with regulations and achieve ResponsibleAg certification.

were conducted in 2015, almost 125,000 compliance issues have been identified at participating facilities. While not all were considered major infractions, and some were only paperwork issues, McArdle says a regulatory agency conducting an audit could cite a facility for any of them. "Today, more than 93,000 of the issues have been resolved, and we've seen a steady decrease year over year in the number of issues identified — indicating that facilities are more engaged and aware of proper safety, security and environmental practices," says McArdle. "While that's a good track record, our goal is to continue to improve those numbers."

Preparing for emissions and climate-related regulations

As a personal goal, McArdle wants to explore adding emissions and climate standards to the ResponsibleAg assessment checklist. "It's thinking outside the box regarding safety, handling, storage and use protocols, yet these types of potential regulations may be coming." He says it could be 5 or 10 years before the industry sees regulatory standards in these areas, but it's a distinct possibility. McArdle continues, "If it does happen, ResponsibleAg wants to be prepared to continue to provide guidance and value by helping our members remain compliant with all regulations."

Milestones reached, more to do

McArdle is proud of the milestones the program has reached to date, particularly in the number of registered and certified facilities — approximately 2,450 participating locations and 1,250 certified facilities. Since the first ResponsibleAg audits

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— Tim McArdle

McArdle concludes — with passion, of course — "Everyone in our industry knows we're fairly highly regulated, so compliance is critical. Participation in ResponsibleAg is an inexpensive way for companies to address compliance issues head on and make sure their Environmental, Health and Safety programs are working."

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

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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**.



TIM MCARDLE
Retired COO of Brandt and retiring Chairman of the Board, ResponsibleAg

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