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Regulatory Compliance Resource for Retailers

ResponsibleAg Certification Program Keeps Retailers in the Know, Demonstrates Commitment to Do the Right Thing

Staying abreast of state and federal regulations is a big job for safety and compliance personnel working in agribusinesses that supply fertilizer and other crop inputs.

"It is hard to know everything," says David Ito, Vice President of Regulatory Affairs for Tremont/Lyman, of Woodland, Calif. There are hundreds of regulations from OSHA, DOT, EPA and DHS that agribusinesses must follow. And, the regulations often change, or new rules are added. In California, where the Tremont/Lyman-affiliated retail and wholesale businesses operate, there are additional state-specific regulations which are even more stringent than federal regulations.

"Because we operate under more stringent regulations in California, Tremont/Lyman has always tried to be proactive in our business practices and our regulatory compliance efforts, working closely with the Western Plant Health Association (WPHA), ARA and other industry organizations," says Ito, whose nearly 35-year career has been in regulatory compliance.

"Being proactive keeps us on the leading edge, so we learn about pending regulations and how they may impact our ability to

do business before they become law."

Ito has been a member of the ResponsibleAg board of directors since the program's creation in 2014 and currently serves as liaison to the communications committee. Tremont/Lyman has always supported ResponsibleAg and today, all sites are registered with this industry initiative.

The company's long-standing involvement in ResponsibleAg led Ito and fellow members of the WPHA Environmental Site Committee to create a state-specific version of the ResponsibleAg assessment checklist for California — the first of its kind within the national certification program.

"ResponsibleAg is a resource for agribusinesses. Information is online, easy-to-use and really brings facility personnel up to speed with regulations."

— David Ito



DAVID ITO
VP of Regulatory Affairs, The Tremont Lyman Group



WPHA and 135 member companies throughout Arizona, California and Hawaii promote the agronomically sound and environmentally safe use and handling of plant health products and services for the production of safe and high-quality food, fiber and horticultural products.

"The ResponsibleAg assessment is a valuable tool for our entire industry. We had many businesses in California committed to the effort," Ito explains. "We felt it was important to incorporate our state-specific regulations to ensure ResponsibleAg members in California are compliant with both California and federal regulations."

During a six-month effort, a committee of facility managers and compliance experts added 36 California-specific questions to the assessment checklist. The California-specific version became available in January 2018. For ResponsibleAg members in California, this single assessment checklist simplifies and streamlines the compliance audit process, eliminating redundancy, saving time and avoiding the risk of missing important aspects of California compliance requirements.



Stringent state-specific regulations impacting agribusinesses was the impetus for a California specific version of the ResponsibleAg assessment checklist.

Voluntary participation benefits entire crop inputs industry

Renee Pinel, President and CEO of WPHA, explains why voluntary participation in programs such as ResponsibleAg is so valuable to members of the association and to the industry overall.

"WPHA has always been about proper stewardship of fertilizer and crop protection products. Our members' willingness to engage proactively in voluntary programs such as the ResponsibleAg Certification Program is one of our industry's greatest strengths," says Pinel. "These programs maintain our credibility with regulators and demonstrate that, as an industry, we're doing everything we can to be good stewards."

"Many of our voluntary efforts go beyond what other industries have done, and by being proactive, we've been able to mitigate action to create additional regulations in California," Pinel says. "We've also been very involved in passing proactive legislation to assure that fertilizers are stored and handled in a safe manner. As a result, we've been able to hold off several very onerous regulations."



RENEE PINEL
President and CEO, Western Plant Health Association

Pinel believes wide-spread industry participation in ResponsibleAg will have the same type of benefit at the federal level as a demonstration of the industry's commitment to doing the right thing to keep employees, customers, communities and the environment safe.

Online assessment is eye-opening resource for agribusinesses

"ResponsibleAg was created as a resource for agribusinesses," Ito says. "The entire assessment process is an educational resource that is easy-to-use and really brings facility personnel up-to-speed with regulations. Using the tools provided, especially the audit checklist, a business can do a self-audit to learn, prepare and correct issues before participating in the ResponsibleAg audit and certification process."

"Sometimes, as we go through the assessment, we find simple things that have been overlooked, like documenting certain processes that are being done, not having the right form to complete or identifying an equipment change out that is needed," Ito explains. "The audit checklist is an educational resource for facility personnel as well as those directly responsible for health, safety, environment and security compliance."

Because regulations frequently change, and new regulations are implemented, the ResponsibleAg assessment checklist and library of online resources are continuously monitored by the ResponsibleAg Technical Committee and updated as needed. The California-specific components of the checklist also will be reviewed and updated periodically.

For more information or to sign up, visit www.ResponsibleAg.org or call 270-683-6777.



Tremont/Lyman affiliated businesses across northern California serve the diverse crop input needs of producers raising tree crops, row crops, rice and vines, including many wine grape operations.

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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**.

