

## NEWSLETTER

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### ResponsibleAg Audits: Data Security, Confidentiality Are Paramount

When Tim McArdle, ResponsibleAg's industry ambassador, began meeting one-on-one with agricultural retailers, he heard similar questions on two topics:

- What is done with data collected through the program?
- Does a ResponsibleAg audit trigger a regulatory agency audit?

McArdle doesn't want misconceptions like these to deter an organization from participating.

McArdle, retired COO of Brandt and recently retired Chairman of the Board of ResponsibleAg, stresses the security and confidentiality of information gathered through ResponsibleAg audits.



"I think there are misconceptions that the information gathered through the program is shared, but it's not," says McArdle. "Only aggregated data is reviewed to gauge program success and provide direction for facility and program improvements." He notes that companies whose facilities are audited by a credentialed ResponsibleAg auditor should be reassured that their information is secure. "You may ask 'can I trust this process?' and you can," McArdle says.

McArdle adds that participating in a ResponsibleAg audit helps prepare ag retailers in case they are inspected by regulatory agencies, but no regulators are involved in the audit – and the act of conducting an audit does not set the company up for a visit from a regulatory agency.

If you have questions about the program or want to learn more about the ResponsibleAg auditing process, McArdle encourages you to contact him at 217-415-6895 or [tim.mcardle@responsibleag.org](mailto:tim.mcardle@responsibleag.org).

[Back to Top](#)

# ResponsibleAG

## SPOTLIGHT



Andy Spahr, Communications Committee Liaison,  
ResponsibleAg Board of Directors

For **Andy Spahr**, vice president of the wholesale fertilizer business for The Andersons, serving on ResponsibleAg's board of directors as the communications committee liaison reflects his company's continued commitment to provide a safe workplace for its employees. His participation on the board also demonstrates the company's firsthand knowledge of the value of ResponsibleAg audits and the importance of achieving facility certification.

The Andersons, a diversified company rooted in agriculture that conducts business in the commodity merchandising, renewables and plant nutrient sectors, has prioritized participating in the ResponsibleAg certification program since the program was created in 2014.

Spahr joined The Andersons as a grain originator, then transitioned into wheat marketing, managing and trading wheat positions for the company. Six years ago, Spahr advanced into product management on the fertilizer side of the company, and in January 2021, he was named to his current role and joined the ResponsibleAg board.

*"There is nothing more important at The Andersons than the safety of our employees and our communities," says Spahr. "The ResponsibleAg program is a key part of our strategy to achieving safety, and it's only possible by ensuring our facilities are following best practices for handling and storing fertilizer across the industry."*

*"Environmental, health and safety professionals at The Andersons and elsewhere say that what excites them most about ResponsibleAg is that it isn't satisfied with the status quo. Instead, the program pushes forward to find ways to improve workplace safety, drive safety measures and tailor program offerings to meet the evolving needs of ag retailers and distributors."*

*"My involvement with ResponsibleAg is an opportunity to advance the program so agriculture and ag retailers achieve lower injury rates and provide a safe working environment for their employees, as well as their grower customers and the communities where they operate."*

What does Spahr tell companies who are not participating in the program?

*"ResponsibleAg has proven it will help ag retail facilities implement and comply with industry best management practices. It is an excellent program to complement existing safety efforts," says Spahr. He adds, "Why would a company pass on the opportunity to tap into the resources of a program like ResponsibleAg, with its proven track record and rigor, to bolster internal safety efforts at facilities?"*

To learn more or participate in the ResponsibleAg program, visit [ResponsibleAg.org](https://responsibleag.org).



With harvest underway – or soon to be – throughout the United States, several OSHA-mandated measures ensure that employers maintain the safety of employees who work around grain storage structures. These include:

- Before an employee enters a bin or performs maintenance, turn off and lock out all powered equipment associated with the bin, including augers that help move the grain, to keep grain from being emptied from or moving into the bin while the employee is inside.
- Prohibit employees from 'walking down' grain or engaging in similar practices that make grain flow.
- Before employees enter a bin, test the air for the presence of combustible and toxic gases and to determine if there is sufficient oxygen.
- Provide all employees a body harness with a lifeline or a boatswain's chair, and be sure it is secured before the employee enters the bin.
- Place a trained observer outside the bin in case of an emergency.
- Prohibit workers from entering bins or silos underneath a bridging condition, or in areas where a build-up of grain products on the sides could fall and bury them.

Would your facility be able to check all the boxes for the grain-related practices noted in the ResponsibleAg audit checklist? Check out the [audit checklist](#) and search for "grain."

## Ensuring Safety for Temporary Workers

During the busy fall season, ag retailers may add seasonal temporary help. Research shows that temporary workers may have a higher risk of experiencing a work-related injury – and the risk may be even greater in certain high-risk industries, including agriculture. Implementing a few measures can help keep temporary workers safe.

- Provide temporary workers with safety training that is identical or equivalent to that provided to full-time employees performing the same or similar work.
- Avoid assigning tasks that require long training periods, significant responsibility, hazardous duties and solo work.
- Learn what workers have been trained for and assign appropriate tasks.
- Start temporary workers in lower-risk tasks, advancing them to higher-risk work as they gain knowledge and skills.

## It's Not Too Early to Register for November Auditor Training Course

Reserve your spot for this year's second ResponsibleAg auditor training course. The unique course, combining in-class and hands-on training, takes place November 15-18 at the Ford B. West Center for Responsible Agriculture in Owensboro, Kentucky. The training center is a retired ag retail facility with a dedicated classroom, so it's an ideal venue to learn the real-world aspects of auditor training. [Read what](#) attendees said about the June auditor training course.

[Reserve Your Seat](#)

## How ResponsibleAg Can Help Ag Retailers Improve Safety and Security – and Save Money

Are you curious about how ResponsibleAg can benefit your environmental, health and safety program – and your ag retail business overall? Watch this webinar, which was held in partnership with ARA and The Fertilizer Institute, to learn why ag retail facility managers from across the country are turning to ResponsibleAg to make safety, security, regulatory compliance and saving money easier.



# How ResponsibleAg Can Help You – Safety, Security and Saving Money.



[Back to Top](#)

ResponsibleAg

## SAFETY at WORK

Alan Mahoney, *President of Mahoney Safety, LLC*  
*Technical Committee, ResponsibleAg*



**Alan Mahoney** has been teaching people about safety for as long as he can remember. It started when he was the training officer for his local volunteer fire department and continued when he was the safety trainer at an ag retail location in his job as the chemical and fertilizer manager. He was named the initial safety, environmental and regulatory manager at the ag cooperative's corporate office, serving in that role until his retirement in 2016.

In 2014, Mahoney became a credentialed auditor for ResponsibleAg. Today, as president of Mahoney Safety, LLC, he conducts audits for ag retailers, many who are small retailers. "For small, independent retailers, with so many rules and regulations, it takes somebody a lot of hours a year to stay on top of things," he says. "It's easy to get behind or miss things." Membership in ResponsibleAg can help small – as well as large – retailers maintain correct safety practices and comply with federal regulations.

Mahoney adds that participating in the program may help ag retailers in hiring. "It's hard to find employees," Mahoney says. "It's hard to recruit good employees and keep them. I believe one of the best ways to keep employees is to show interest in their safety. We must provide them a safe workplace. I think ResponsibleAg helps with that."

[Read the entire story.](#)

[Back to Top](#)

# Why ResponsibleAg?



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

"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. We'll invest up front to reduce our risk."

**Billy Willard**  
*CEO of Willard Agri-Service of Frederick, Inc.,  
Farmer, Montgomery County, Maryland*

"I frequently use ResponsibleAg's Compliance Assistance Library when working with facility managers, who appreciate the brief, no-nonsense summary of requirements related to a piece of equipment or activity that may have been noted as a corrective action on their audit."

**Mike Henry**  
*Director of Environmental, Gavilon Fertilizer  
Omaha, Nebraska*



[Back to Top](#)

## See You at ARA's Conference and Expo, Nov. 29 - Dec. 1

Stop by ResponsibleAg's booth #107 and visit with Tim McArdle, industry ambassador, to have your questions answered about the program. McArdle, retired Brandt COO, can share his first-hand experience of ResponsibleAg's benefits while he was at Brandt. We hope to you in San Diego.

[Back to Top](#)

### [News from Around the Industry](#)

#### OSHA's Enforcement Summary for FY 2021 Shows an Increase in Inspections

OSHA's 2021 Enforcement Summary highlighting the agency's inspection statistics shows the number of programmed and unprogrammed inspections increased from 2020. In fiscal year 2021, OSHA conducted 24,333 inspections, including 13,749 (approximately 57%) unprogrammed inspections arising from employee complaints, injuries/fatalities and referrals. Of the total number of inspections, 10,584 (approximately 43%) were programmed inspections that focused on industries and operations where known hazards exist, such as combustible dusts and chemical processing. Overall, OSHA continues to devote considerable resources to referrals and complaints.

#### Celebrate National Farm Safety and Health Week, Sept. 18-24

Each day during National Farm Safety and Health Week, free webinars related to daily safety topics are available. Encourage employees to tune into the safety webinars, including those covering rural roadway safety and grain bin safety.



[Register for AgriSafe Webinars](#)

[Back to Top](#)

#### Welcome ResponsibleAg Credentialed Auditors

ResponsibleAg is excited to announce that **Kevin Spors** with Nutrien Ag Solutions in New London, Minnesota, and **James Wagner** with Helena Agri-Enterprises in Greenup, Illinois, are now credentialed. Thank you for your continued commitment to safety.

[Back to Top](#)

#### More Locations Receive Certification!

Welcome to these facilities that are now Committed, Compliant, Safe and Certified. We'd like to send a special shout out to the locations that have completed recertification, noted below with an asterisk\*. The commitment to safety by all these facilities represents an incredibly positive and important effort for our industry. Congratulations to all!

\*Buttonwillow Warehouse Co. - Corcoran, CA  
Buttonwillow Warehouse Co. - Corcoran, CA  
Buttonwillow Warehouse Co. - Stratford, CA  
\*CHS, Inc. - Watertown, SD  
\*Coffee Farmers Co-op - Manchester, TN  
Gavilon Fertilizer LLC - Little Rock, AR  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Batesville, MS  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Boyle, MS  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Elaine, AR  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Houston, MS  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Marks, MS  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Osceola, AR  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Portageville, MO  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Rockford, TN  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Rolling Fork, MS  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Ruleville, MS  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Shelby, MS  
\*GreenPoint Ag - Texarkana, AR

GROWMARK AgVantage FS - West Branch, IA  
\*GROWMARK FS - Gainsville, NY  
GROWMARK FS Midwest - Ruthven, IA  
\*GROWMARK New Century FS - Brooklyn, IA  
GROWMARK New Century FS - Malcom, IA  
\*GROWMARK New Century FS - Newton, IA  
\*Nutrien Ag Solutions - Clarkson, KY  
\*Nutrien Ag Solutions - Levelland, TX  
\*Nutrien Ag Solutions - Manila, AR  
\*Nutrien Ag Solutions - Paris, TX  
\*Nutrien Ag Solutions - Quincy, IL  
\*Simplot Grower Solutions - Colusa, CA  
\*Simplot Grower Solutions - Five Points, CA  
Simplot Grower Solutions - Knippa, TX  
Simplot Grower Solutions - Lamesa, TX  
Simplot Grower Solutions - Roscoe, TX  
Simplot Grower Solutions - Taft, TX

[Back to Top](#)

#### OUR 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**.

