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**Fertilizer Institute**

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**AGRICULTURAL  
RETAILERS  
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**For Immediate Release:  
February 18, 2014**

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## **Agricultural Retailers Association and The Fertilizer Institute Join Forces to Establish ResponsibleAg**

### ***Independent Entity to Promote a Culture of Safety and Security at the Nation's Retail Fertilizer Outlets***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA) and The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) today announced plans to create ResponsibleAg, an independent, not-for-profit organization designed to support fertilizer retailers' compliance with federal safety and security regulations.

Under ResponsibleAg, retail fertilizer dealerships will have access to comprehensive inspections based on federal regulatory requirements. The inspections will be carried out by trained auditors who will have successfully completed an intensive training course based on the objectives of ResponsibleAg.

“While the vast majority of fertilizer retail businesses operate safely, securely and in compliance with federal regulations, we are acting out of an abundance of caution and concern for the wellbeing of workers and communities,” said TFI President Chris Jahn. “ResponsibleAg will

verify compliance at more facilities and with greater speed than is currently being done by the multitude of federal agencies that regulate the nation's fertilizer retailers, so we are choosing to act now rather than waiting for the next government inspection.”

“ResponsibleAg will help ensure existing regulations are conveyed and easily understood by fertilizer retailers,” said ARA President & CEO Daren Coppock. “Retailers want to do the right thing, but overlapping, duplicative or potentially conflicting requirements make compliance a challenge. This program will help retailers by collecting the regulatory requirements into one standard, and offering them tools and information to ensure their facilities conform to all current federal regulations.”

ResponsibleAg will credential auditors who will inspect and verify individual facilities' level of compliance with applicable federal regulations. Facilities that successfully complete assessments will be recognized for having done so. Any site that does not successfully complete an assessment will be provided a list of recommended corrective actions. Additionally, random quality assurance reviews to verify the assessments will be conducted by third party auditors.

TFI and ARA are each contributing \$100,000 in startup capital for the organization, and the Asmark Institute is providing an ongoing contribution that provides for training programs, training facilities and administration of the ResponsibleAg website and database. Once established, ResponsibleAg will be funded by registration fees paid by participating fertilizer storage and handling inventory points and their suppliers. Auditor training costs will be funded by tuition paid by those seeking the ResponsibleAg auditor credential. Membership in TFI, ARA or any other organization is not a requirement for participation.

“ARA and TFI are committed to ResponsibleAg as a common sense approach to mitigating the potential of another accident like the one in West,” Coppock said. “Compliance needs to be the focus rather than a push for broad new regulations. The effort and resources retailers dedicate to compliance should be directed towards achieving the greatest level of safety and security possible for employees, first responders and the communities in which our members live and work.”

ARA and TFI will nominate a nine person Board of Directors which will be filled from a cross section representing the entire fertilizer distribution network. Once the Board of Directors has been seated, it will adopt ResponsibleAg bylaws, create an annual operating budget and appoint a business manager to oversee day-to-day operations. When the initial Board of Directors' term has expired, subsequent Directors will be nominated from ResponsibleAg participating organizations.

“Fertilizer retailers play a critical role in the nation’s food production system and support local economies by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services,” said Jahn. “ResponsibleAg will help ensure that whether small or large, these essential businesses have access to the latest information on regulatory compliance.”

***Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA)*** *The Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA), a 501(c)(6) nonprofit trade association, advocates, influences, educates and provides services to support its members in their quest to maintain a profitable business environment, adapt to a changing world and preserve their freedom to operate. ARA represents the interests of agricultural retailers and distributors across the United States on legislative and regulatory issues by educating members of Congress and agency officials on important issues affecting the industry. For more information about ARA, go to [www.aradc.org](http://www.aradc.org), like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter (@agretailers).*

***The Fertilizer Institute (TFI)*** *is the leading voice of the nation’s fertilizer industry. Tracing its roots back to 1883, TFI’s membership includes fertilizer producers, wholesalers, retailers and trading firms. TFI’s full-time staff, based in Washington, D.C., serves its members through legislative, educational, technical, economic information and public communication programs. Find more information about TFI online at [TFI.org](http://TFI.org) and follow us on Twitter at [@Fertilizer\\_Inst](https://twitter.com/Fertilizer_Inst) and [SlideShare](https://twitter.com/SlideShare). Learn more about TFI’s nutrient stewardship initiatives at [nutrientstewardship.org](http://nutrientstewardship.org) and on Twitter at [@4rnutrients](https://twitter.com/4rnutrients).*

***Asmark Institute*** *is a national resource center serving the retail agricultural industry, consisting of retail agribusinesses, state and national trade associations, educational institutions and government agencies. The Institute provides compliance materials and services, develops common sense solutions to new regulatory requirements, assists the government in its mission of protecting life, property and the environment, monitors enforcement activity for uniformity, supports industry efforts to arrive at fair and reasonable regulation and provides a wealth of unique resources to give wings to the ideas designed to help lift an industry. The Institute is a private, not-for-profit organization that provides a forum for organizations to effectively collaborate on issues for the benefit of the retail agricultural industry.*