Seasons Greetings!
As we enter into the holiday season, all of us at the Asmark Institute would like to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year. We appreciate the relationship that has been developed between our organizations over the years, and especially the opportunity to have worked with you in 2014!

New DVD Number 5 Ships Soon
Watch for UPS to deliver your new DVD Number 5 at the end of the year. Please be prepared to open your package as soon as you receive it and follow the instructions to complete the exchange. DVD Number 5 contains the Custom Application Vehicle: Safety on the Road training program developed in cooperation with the Agricultural Retailers Association. Our thanks to Donnie Taylor, Dustin Warder, Brian Mason and Nick Clements for their work on this project.

ResponsibleAg Registration Set to Open
The ResponsibleAg Certification Program is set to begin registering participants on Monday December 8, 2014. Registration is voluntary and is open to any business that stores or handles fertilizer products. The focus of the program for the first three years will be on companies that store and handle ammonium nitrate and/or anhydrous ammonia fertilizer. By participating in this voluntary industry initiative, you will be joining thousands of other agricultural retailers across the U.S. in demonstrating a proactive commitment to providing a safe, secure and compliant workplace for your employees, customers and neighbors. We encourage you to register your facilities and support the program. The following information will help you in understanding more about the mission of ResponsibleAg:

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Short Tutorial on ResponsibleAg
- Download the [ResponsibleAg Assessment](#)
- Check out the [Compliance Assistance Library](#)
- Start preparing for your assessment by completing the [Compliance Assessment Tool](#)

Please don’t hesitate to contact Ewa Oller (Ext 224) at the Asmark Institute or the ResponsibleAg Helpdesk at 270-683-6777 or by E-mail at helpdesk@responsibleag.org if you have questions or need additional information.

ResponsibleAg Auditor Training Schedule Announced
Registration is now open for all upcoming sessions of ResponsibleAg auditor training through the end of 2015. The next course will be held February 10-13, 2015. The course will be offered about once a month through the end of the year. Minimum applicant prerequisites have been established to ensure the experience, knowledge base and objectives of auditor candidates are as uniform as possible. Please click [here](#) to register or obtain more detailed information on the ResponsibleAg program and the auditor course. If you are interested in becoming a ResponsibleAg auditor, then don’t delay, register today! Classes are limited in size and number and offered on a first-come first-serve basis.
Beware! - EPA’s Notice on Bulk Pesticide Producing Report (PPR)

Each fall, EPA sends out a notice to remind all bulk pesticide facilities that it is time to start preparing the Annual Bulk Pesticide Producing Report (PPR). This year’s notice includes instructions to register with CDX to facilitate electronic reporting to EPA. Registration with CDX is NOT required, and as a Lighthouse retainer client of the Asmark Institute, we take care of preparing this report and submitting it to EPA for you. If you have already completed the Compliance Wizard for 2014, we will have your report ready for your signature shortly after the first of the year. We will file the completed reports with EPA before the March 1st deadline and send you a file copy including the tracking documentation that proves receipt by EPA in early March. If you have questions, please call Nick at Ext 212.

Consolidation Chart Updated to Reflect 2014

Accurately tracking the consolidation within ag retail is challenging, but thanks to CropLife magazine’s Top 100 list, along with hours of research, the Consolidation Chart has been updated to visually portray its heritage. Initially released in 2011, the chart includes all the mergers/acquisitions among CropLife 100 retailers that have taken place since 1984. To view a full version of this poster, please click here. For more information, contact Donna at Ext 205 or by email at donna@asmark.org.

Are You Monitoring Your CSA Score?

DOT’s Comprehensive Safety Analysis (CSA) Safety Measurement System (SMS) website is available and motor carriers are highly recommended to check their safety scores: http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms. To login into the SMS website and see your safety data, you will need a FMCSA-issued U.S. DOT Number Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you do not know or have forgotten your PIN, you can request one via http://safer.fmcsa.dot.gov/ and select “Click here to request your Docket Number PIN and/or USDOT Number PIN.” Be sure to request a U.S. DOT Number PIN, NOT a Docket Number PIN.

UPS Introduces Dimensional Weight Pricing

This past June, FedEx and UPS announced that they would apply dimensional weight pricing to all shipments, effective January 2015, affecting light packages shipped in a larger than necessary box. It’s expected that shipping costs will increase 20-30% for some shippers such as Amazon that choose to ship all sizes of items in a standard over-sized box. When the dimensional weight (L x W x H multiplied by "X") is greater than the actual weight of the package, the dimensional weight will be used for rate calculations. What is the “X” factor? FedEx uses 139, UPS uses 166, and USPS uses 194, according to their respective websites. Note: While Asmark Institute clients shouldn’t notice much, if any, of an increase from the dimensional pricing, it’s worth mentioning the benefits associated with utilizing the Electronic Service Program (ESP). Click here to check out ESP.

Reminder: New OSHA reporting requirements go into effect January 1st

Starting January 1, 2015, all employers must report all work-related fatalities within 8 hours and all in-patient hospitalizations, amputations and losses of an eye within 24 hours of finding out about the incident. Employers can report an incident by calling 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), calling your nearest OSHA area office during normal business hours (www.osha.gov/html/RAmap.html) or online at http://www.osha.gov/report_online.

Can a Driver Get a Second Opinion on a DOT Physical?

DOT has made an important clarification for motor carriers concerning medical and physical qualifications to drive. Second opinions can be requested by drivers when obtaining DOT physicals. Chuck Horan, who oversees the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners administered by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, recently said “drivers can get a second opinion, as long as they provide a full and honest history to their medical examiners and do not cross the line into illegal doctor shopping. “When we at the
National Registry get two records on one particular driver, we have the capability of pulling the long form from both medical examiners and look at the long forms back-to-back." The information given by the driver must be the same for both doctors for the second opinion to be considered.

**Sleep Apnea**: According to a bill passed by Congress and signed into law in October 2013, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration shall not issue guidance to medical examiners on sleep apnea or advance an apnea restriction without first going through a full rulemaking process that includes a public comment period. Confusion persists by some physicians in believing they must screen for sleep apnea, when that is simply not the case.

**Long Term Status of Social Security?**
We don't know what the future holds, but Social Security is likely to continue as a source of some retirement income for baby boomers. From a planning perspective, any assumptions made about the impact of Social Security on retirement should be conservative. Every year, the government-appointed Social Security Board of Trustees releases a report on the financial outlook for the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds. In the 2013 Annual Report to Congress, the trustees announced two dates: (1) The projected point at which the combined trust funds will be exhausted comes in 2033—the same as estimated in last year's report. At that time, there will be sufficient tax revenue to pay about 77% of benefits. (2) The combined trust fund reserves are growing and will continue to do so through 2020. Beginning with 2021, the cost of the program is projected to exceed income. There is no correct answer on how to include Social Security in planning. Ultimately, you must make your own retirement-planning decisions based on your level of comfort with the risks.

**OSHA: Overhead Lifting Chain Compliance**
Vertical lifting can be done with a hoist, cherry picker/engine lift, overhead crane or essentially any vertical lift. These chains must be a specific grade of chain to be in compliance and will have the appropriate markings embossed in them. It is always important to remember to never add your own chains or hooks to a manufactured lifting device without consulting the manufacturers specifications. Vertical lifting chains are purchased as an assembly only. It's important to remember that vertical lifting chains CANNOT be assembled on-site for liability purposes. All chains must have a metal tag attached that contains the following information:

- Working Load Limit (rated capacity) - identify the maximum load for the vertical lift;
- Size - size of chain links; i.e., 3/8" or 1/2", etc;
- Length - to be able to measure each year on annual inspections;
- Grade - to identify the grade of the chain for proper compliance chain; and
- Serial Number - used to identify the chain for annual inspection.

Annual inspections must be performed by a competent inspector who is trained on inspection and rigging with the experience necessary to identify faulty equipment. Be sure to document the annual inspections.

**Federal Wage and Labor Law Poster Update**
**Ohio** - Minimum Wage Notice - Effective 01/01/15
The minimum wage is changing to $8.10 for non-tipped employees. This is a material substantive change and a new, Ohio All–In-One poster is required. Click [here](#) to order.

**Florida** - Minimum Wage Notice - Effective 01/01/15
The minimum wage is changing to $8.05 for non-tipped employees. This is a material substantive change and a new, Florida All–In-One poster is required. Click [here](#) to order.

**Oregon** - Minimum Wage Notice - Effective 01/01/15
The minimum wage will increase to $9.25. This is a material substantive change and a new, Oregon All–In-One poster is required. Click [here](#) to order.

**Delaware** - Discrimination Notice - No effective dates are listed, but the law that added this protected class was effective as of the day the law was signed (9/9/14), therefore the posting requirement should be
considered effective immediately. Delaware has added pregnancy accommodations to the Discrimination notice. This is a material substantive change and a new, Delaware All-In-One poster is required. In addition to the posting requirement, employers will also be required to notify, in writing, existing employees, new hires and pregnant employees (the latter within 10 days of notification of the pregnancy). Click here to order.

**AAA: 21% of Fatal Crashes Involve Drowsy Drivers**
According to new research from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, more than 21% of fatal crashes involve driver fatigue. One third of crashes involving a drowsy driver result in injuries, and more than 6,000 fatigue-related crashes each year result in at least one fatality. Despite the fact that 95% of Americans deem it “unacceptable” to drive when they are so tired that they have a hard time keeping their eyes open, more than 28% admit to doing so in the last month,” Mr. Kissinger said. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety’s Prevalence of Motor Vehicle Crashes Involving Drowsy Drivers report is based on the analysis of a representative sample of 14,268 crashes that occurred in years 2009–2013, in which at least one vehicle was towed from the scene.

**2014 Asmark Institute, Inc.** This information is believed to be reliable by the Asmark Institute, however, because of constantly changing government regulations, interpretations and applicability or the possibility of human, mechanical or computer error, the Asmark Institute does not guarantee the information as suitable for any particular purpose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grain Handling</th>
<th>Emergency Response</th>
<th>ResponsibleAg</th>
<th>Ammonia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to the Grain Industry</td>
<td>Full Course</td>
<td>Auditor Credentialing Course</td>
<td>Ammonia Technician Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1-Day) $140</td>
<td>(4-Days) $450</td>
<td>(4-Days) $2,150</td>
<td>(3-Days) $325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington, IL</td>
<td>LaVergne, TN</td>
<td>Owensboro, KY</td>
<td>Bloomington, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Grain Handling Operations</td>
<td>Refresher Course</td>
<td>Technician Course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2-Days) $265</td>
<td>(1-Day) $140</td>
<td>(4-Days) $325</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington, IL</td>
<td>Mobile Course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 11-12, 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mar 10-12, 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To register, go to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.responsibleag.org/Training/">www.responsibleag.org/Training/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>