

ARA

American Agronomic
Stewardship Alliance

ARA

Legislators of the Year

AASA: A Conduit for Compliance & Stewardship



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If you are an ag retailer and store bulk pesticide products anywhere in the United States, you are very familiar with the American Agronomic Stewardship Alliance (AASA). This organization began inspecting bulk pesticide storage facilities in 2004 and has covered the country three times inspecting more than 5,000 facilities. This is to help retailers ensure compliance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations and to ensure the overall stewardship of pesticide products.

AASA is a not-for-profit organization. It began in 2001 with a collaborative effort between the Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA) and CropLife America (CLA) to find a better way to promote and ensure stewardship of bulk pesticides. Today, the AASA board of directors consists of 15 companies and individuals from the ag industry. With extensive deliberation and exasperation, AASA developed a single checklist for inspecting retail agrichemical facilities and performed the first inspections using the checklist in 2004. Six years later, AASA is much more than the famous "checklist" they developed; they've grown from just another acronym to a multi-faceted partner when it comes to compliance, communication and consistency.

With the new EPA Container and Containment Rules kicking in, ag retailers are in real need of personal assistance when it comes to understanding these regulations and the modifications they need to make in containment and minibulk management. When the AASA inspectors show up, they help explain the new requirements, they don't just quote the rulebook. Their business is bulk pesticide systems, and through AASA they make a daunting regulation easier for retailers to understand. Retailers also



Representatives from AASA, ARA, IFCA and the South Dakota Agri-Business Association on the demonstration event at Eastern Farmers Cooperative in Worthing, S.D.

know the AASA inspectors will be back once every three years, which assures them that compliance help will be consistent and personal via the AASA.

Each year, AASA selects an ag retail site to demonstrate to the local community and to the industry how the program assures pesticide stewardship. This year, the AASA board was honored to be joined by members of the ARA board of directors during the AASA demonstration event at Eastern Farmers Cooperative in Worthing, S.D.

Ag retailers are given a postcard to send in after their inspection to provide feedback to the AASA board. One retailer took the time to express his appreciation, saying "The inspector was very polite and told me what I needed to change and also what was going to change in the future. Thank you."

To see the regions that are inspected each year and to view the checklist, go to www.aginspect.org. The next round of AASA inspections will begin in the late spring of 2011. AASA truly is a conduit for compliance and stewardship for ag retailers from coast to coast. **AG**

