



American Agronomic Stewardship Alliance

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Q&A Fact Sheet

What is the American Agronomic Stewardship Alliance (AASA)?

The American Agronomic Stewardship Alliance (AASA) is a not-for-profit 501C (6) organization that has taken the lead in developing a stewardship inspection and accreditation program for agricultural retail facilities that store bulk, mini-bulk and packaged products.

Why is this program needed?

This program is designed to enhance stewardship and increase efficiency. The AASA has developed a single checklist and schedule for inspecting agricultural retail facilities. This is replacing the duplicative bulk inspections of facilities conducted by manufacturers for the past several years. Working together, manufacturers, distributors and retailers have developed a more effective way to conduct facility inspections.

What are the benefits to retailers?

Facilities will be inspected more efficiently; instead of each manufacturer conducting a facility inspection, the AASA conducts the inspection with resulting data available on a fee basis to all manufacturers and distributors. Retailers will have fewer and more efficient inspections based on one stewardship checklist. There is no cost to retailers.

What are the benefits to manufacturers and distributors?

Manufacturers and distributors have one-stop access to facility inspection data through the AASA. Better data about facilities means better decision making. The program replaces costly and duplicative inspections previously conducted individually by manufacturers. The AASA's inspection data services are available to all crop protection manufacturers and distributors on a fee basis. Distributors that are AASA members do not pay for inspection data for their locations. Release of inspection data is confidential and limited to those locations where manufacturers and distributors have a bulk presence. Inspection data is available to these manufacturers and distributors for stewardship purposes only. As in the past, manufacturers and distributors who have or plan to have a bulk presence at a facility will use the inspection data as a tool to determine where crop protection products can be stored safely.

How is the program being implemented and managed?

The AASA oversees the program. The AASA is managed by a board of directors that includes crop protection manufacturers, retailers, distributors, state regulators and state agribusiness associations. The AASA conducts inspections, issues facility reports, train inspectors and ensures the checklist is kept current. The AASA program is administered by the Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association who represents the interests of ag retailers and crop protection input suppliers.

How many facilities will be inspected?

Approximately 5,000 U.S. facilities storing bulk and packaged crop protection products have been inspected over a three year period. (Packaged-only retail sites will be included in a later cycle.) This three-year cycle provides for fairness by giving facilities time to address any areas of concern. AASA is in the second stage of a three year inspection cycle; meaning this is the second time facilities have been inspected over a three year period.

How and when will inspections be conducted?

Inspections are conducted by third-party vendors using a comprehensive stewardship checklist. This checklist covers general facility data, information about bulk and package storage and safety training. Inspections occur primarily from June through September of each year. Facility managers are provided with a copy of their inspection reports.

Who will conduct the inspections and maintain the data?

Inspectors from Regulatory Consultants, Inc., Piedmont Environmental Consulting, LLC and JTAG, Inc will be contacting facility managers to set up inspection appointments. Inspector credentials can be verified at www.aginspect.org. Regulatory Consultants, Inc. will also be responsible for all data management.

How many facilities will be inspected in 2009?

Approximately 1,600 facilities will be inspected in the following states: Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri, Kentucky, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. All bulk agricultural retail facilities will be notified in advance by the AASA.

How will the inspection data be used?

Facility inspection data will be available to participating crop protection manufacturers and distributors who have or plan to have a bulk presence at a retail facility. The inspection data will only be used to assist with decisions regarding where products can be safely stored.

How are these inspections different from before?

For more than 15 years crop protection manufacturers and distributors inspected retail facilities using their own inspection programs. In some years a retail facility may have had multiple inspections, based on multiple sets of criteria. Now, retailers are receiving a single, regular inspection, using one checklist. The AASA is providing one-stop inspection data for manufacturers and distributors who are participating in the AASA stewardship program. Some manufacturers and distributors may continue to conduct bulk site inspections at facilities on an annual basis for the years when there will not be an AASA inspection in certain states. Companies may also continue to conduct inspections when new bulk tanks are added at a facility or when tanks are taken over from other suppliers or when there is a change in product to be stored in established tanks.

Will this data be available to regulators?

No. The data is owned by the AASA. Only crop protection manufacturing companies that pay a fee and have or plan to have a bulk presence at a given retail facility and the distributor whose facility has been inspected will have access to inspection data.

Contact the American Agronomic Stewardship Alliance or your state association for more information about the stewardship program or visit www.aginspect.org .