

## Getting to Know Your Fertilizer Retailer.

“Industry Experts - The Value of Your Fertilizer Retailer” is a publication of The Fertilizer Institute (TFI). TFI serves to promote and protect the fertilizer industry, representing the public policy, communication and statistical needs of producers, importers, wholesalers and retailers of fertilizer, as well as those companies that provide vital services to the fertilizer industry.

For more information, visit [www.tfi.org](http://www.tfi.org).

 The Fertilizer Institute  
Nourish, Replenish, Grow

820 First Street N.E., Suite 430  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 962-0490

## INDUSTRY EXPERTS The Value of *Your* Fertilizer Retailer.

**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

 The Fertilizer Institute  
Nourish, Replenish, Grow

## MAKING THE CONNECTION.

*How Your Retailer Brings N, P and K to You.*

N



Nitrogen is currently produced in over 80 countries worldwide. The United States imports over 50 percent of U.S. farmers' nitrogen supplies.

P



Phosphate rock reserves have been identified in 32 countries, but 63 percent of total world production may be attributed to the top three producing countries.

K



Potash ore reserves have been identified in 21 countries, but economic extraction is currently limited to 12 countries. The United States imports 85 percent of American farmers' potash needs.

### A GLOBAL INDUSTRY

Fertilizer is a world market commodity and U.S. farmers must compete with farmers from around the world for nitrogen, phosphate and potash. In fact, the United States is the largest importer of fertilizer in the world, with more than half our nitrogen and over 85 percent of our potash coming from international sources.

The recent increase in global demand for fertilizer, which has primarily been driven by the quest for healthier lives and better diets in developing countries, has played a large part in placing upward pressure on fertilizer prices until September 2008.

Retailers understand that the effects of world market supply and demand dynamics can greatly impact U.S. farmers. As a result, retailers stand prepared to assist farmers as they address the wide range of challenges and risks that are a part of each growing season.

Fertilizer retailers are dedicated to ensuring farmers' ability to maximize their profits per acre. They do so by providing access to agronomists and certified crop advisors (CCA), who have the knowledge and the resources to help growers maximize yields while minimizing impacts to the environment, and managing input costs.



Fertilizer is transported in solid or fluid form from its point of origin or manufacturing site by ocean-going tanker, river barge, railroad, over-the-road trucks or moved through pipelines as a liquid or gas. In most cases, fertilizers have had a long journey incorporating one or more of these modes of transportation before they reach fertilizer retailers and eventually make their way to the fields of American farmers.

*Global demand* for fertilizer and *increased transportation costs* to move fertilizer products can contribute to increased delivered fertilizer prices.

# THE VALUE OF YOUR FERTILIZER RETAILER

## AGRONOMIC EXPERTISE

Fertilizer retailers have the expertise to apply fertilizers in an agronomically and environmentally safe way that ensures that farmers are using the right fertilizer source at the right rate, right time and right place, or implementing what is known as the 4R nutrient stewardship system.

The 4R nutrient stewardship system boasts serious benefits for farmers and the environment – yielding economic benefits for growers by boosting yields, while guaranteeing the purchase and application of the exact amount of fertilizer that is necessary to replenish soils and maximize farmers' returns per acre. This results in benefits to the environment by restoring soil health through the application of the nutrients that are missing and reduces overuse and the potential for runoff or other nutrient losses that may impact land and water resources.

Fertilizer retailers play a vital role in promoting and executing the simple fundamentals that are represented by the 4R system.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Fertilizer retailers assume risk on behalf of their farmer customers in two important ways. First, retailers assume the risks and costs associated with storing large quantities of fertilizer products so that farmers don't have to. A wide range of regulations apply to storing fertilizers and retailers are educated in the compliance measures that are required by local, state and federal regulations. This assumption of risk holds economic value for producers and also provides added benefits for the environment as retailers and their employees are trained and educated to properly store, handle, mix, transport and apply commercial fertilizers.

The second way fertilizer retailers assume and manage risk on behalf of their customers is by purchasing and storing substantial amounts of a variety of fertilizer products. Retailers must be prepared to offer farmers the right fertilizer source at the right time, and this often means assuming risk by purchasing fertilizers in advance of knowing a farmer customer's exact needs.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

A major component of a local retailer's business is connecting with its farmer customers and developing a service plan that is tailored to meet their needs. Retailers often have certified crop advisors (CCA) on staff who are certified to advise farmers regarding nutrient management; soil and water management; integrated pest management; and crop management. From completing soil tests to assisting farmers in the application of the 4R system, retailers and CCAs have the resources available to help farmers be as efficient and as profitable as possible.

Fertilizer retailers also have the equipment and expertise to properly blend and apply fertilizer products. By working with a local retailer, farmers can trust that they are purchasing quality products that will perform properly. Additionally, working through a local retailer also provides farmers with someone to consult with should there be an application or performance issue associated with a product.

## PRECISION AGRICULTURE:

### *Ask the Expert*

Fertilizer retailers have the resources and expertise to keep farmers up to speed on the latest agricultural concepts and tools.

Fertilizer retailers can help farmers integrate precision agriculture technologies such as global positioning systems (GPS), satellites or aerial images and information management tools (GIS) that are used to assess the variability of a farmer's field in order to more accurately determine the need for fertilizer and other agricultural inputs.

Precision agriculture technologies also play a valuable role in the application of the 4R nutrient stewardship system, and as a result contribute to achieving the economic, social and environmental objectives that are associated with the 4R system.

## Fertilizer Retailers' Contributions to Rural America.

Local retailers provide benefits that stretch beyond the services and agronomic expertise they offer their farmer customers. In addition to contributing to the success of farmers in their community, local retailers also make valuable contributions to the rural communities they operate in and around by providing a wide range of employment opportunities.

Independent local dealers and cooperatives often recruit and attract college graduates. The addition of young, college educated individuals to rural communities is an important factor in the sustainability and growth of rural communities. Local retailers provide employment opportunities for a wide range of individuals of varying ages and backgrounds in rural America.

Many retailers also support state fertilizer quality and research programs by paying tonnage fees to state governments that assure statewide testing for product quality and fund research on fertilizer efficiency as well as education regarding the safe use of fertilizer.