

## FLORICULTURE'S PLIGHT TOPIC OF FLORICULTURE WORKING GROUP WINTER MEETING

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The plight of floriculture programs in U.S. universities was the featured topic of the floriculture working group meeting held in Chicago in January. State-by-state reports revealed reductions in staff, both increases and decreases in student enrollment and less funds for extension, research and teaching. All of these reductions and downsizing were reported occurring while floriculture is becoming the fastest growing segment of agriculture in the United States. Retail floriculture (floral design) and entire ornamental programs have been eliminated according to university representatives from some states. One representative said budget problems have forced staff to take 1 day off without pay every 2 weeks. Noted bright spots in floriculture were Florida's plans for a research station in Milton, the rebuilding of Ohio State's department, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls' program, stability in Connecticut, increased staff in Tennessee and new research facilities for the USDA, Beltsville, Md.

Prior to the status reports, the working group received updates on the National Florist and Nursery Crops Review (NFNCR). Speaking as Chair of the NFNCR, Dr. Henry M. Cathey (USDA) emphasized that society benefits to the economy and environment have become the only justifications for florist/nursery research today. He added that society is overwhelmingly moving to an urban environment agriculture and the florist/nursery is the only sector of agriculture moving forward. Condemning the jealousies that have developed among the various green industry sectors, Cathey stresses that we must develop better working relationships in the green industry if we are to obtain the research funding that we need and deserve. Cathey announced that a meeting of the NFNCR will be held on 6 May 1993 at the National Center of American Floriculture in Alexandria, Va.

Jim Lieder, President of the Society of American Florists, expressed concern for the plight of the floriculture programs in our universities as he described the FI and other SAF efforts to advance the industry. He suggested a proactive approach and noted that the success of the industry depends on the success of research. Research on groundwater and whiteflies have been selected for funding by the FI; Lieder called upon Dr. Terril Nell (Univ. of Florida) to detail the funding proposal. Lieder also described other SAF efforts aimed at improving the floriculture industry; Flowers for the Clinton inauguration, the integrated pest control conference, Promoflo (cut flower promotion), a careers, recruitment video, Vic and Margaret Ball floriculture production internship (under the American Floral Endowment), Quarantine 37, the North American Trade Agreement, industry groundwater standards and a new SAF publication of growers.

A dinner was hosted by the George J. Ball Company, Inc. (Dr. Marvin Miller), Grace-Sierra Company (Dr. Richard Biamonte), Vaughan Company (Dr. James Corfield) and Yoder Brothers (Dr. Carl Scharfenberg) prior to the two-session meeting in Chicago. Paul Ecke, Jr., of Paul Ecke Poinsettias, provided wine at the finale dinner.

The Chair concluded that the "times are changing." In the Land of Lincoln it was appropriate to quote, "We must think anew! and Act anew!" Also, there has never been a greater challenge than now! It has been an education, privilege and honor to chair the floriculture working group. Thank you!

The floriculture working group is being placed in good hands. Allen Hammer will be a strong, innovative chair, but he will need all the support the working group can give for success.