

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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CK Greenhouses Buys Weiss' CT Location

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Business is pretty good for Charlie Kurtz, owner and namesake of CK Greenhouses, Cheshire, Connecticut, which is why he recently purchased 15 acres of land and half a million sq. ft. of greenhouse space from one of the country's largest growers, New York-based Kurt Weiss Greenhouses. The deal was closed just before Christmas.

"We needed more production space," was Charlie's simple answer to the "Why?" question. "Our customer base is growing, and we needed the space to support that growth." That growth is coming in northern New England, he says, with both mass merchant and IGC customers. CK grows mainly annuals.

CK was just over 500,000 sq. ft. on two Cheshire locations. The addition of 495,000 sq. ft. puts Charlie at that magic million-square-foot mark. The facilities include a mix of gutter-connected and Quonset houses, which he's already filling.

Conveniently, the Weiss property is adjacent to CK's second location, which in turn is only a mile from headquarters.

Why did Weiss decide to sell their Cheshire, Connecticut, location? *GrowerTalks* asked Kirk Weiss, second-generation co-owner of the business.

"We've got a lot of locations," Kirk replied, "and we're looking to grow in some of our larger facilities."

Kirk says the core of their business takes place in New York (they're headquartered on Long Island), New Jersey and Pennsylvania. But they do business all the way down to Florida, with some 20 locations (he thinks) to serve that vast market. So selling one certainly isn't a sign of downsizing. To the contrary, "We're looking to expand," Kirk says, "and we'd rather put more of our energy into a larger site, rather than having multiple small sites."

Evidence of Weiss's confidence in the future: His two sons have come into the family business in the last three years, joining patriarch Russell (still very active in the business, Kirk says) and Kirk's brother Wayne.

Says Kirk of his sons, "I wouldn't have them in the business if I didn't think this was a long-term thing." **GT**