

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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First Two Growers Certified Under Systems Approach Pilot Program

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A big step forward toward protecting the horticulture industry and the environment took place with the recent signing of agreements by two progressive nursery and greenhouse operations. McKay Nursery Company Inc. (Wisconsin) and Star Roses and Plants (Pennsylvania) have become the first two facilities to be able to ship plants grown under the Systems Approach to Nursery Certification (SANC) program, an initiative under the guidance of the National Plant Board, AmericanHort, other industry members and the USDA.

With their SANC certification, these facilities will now be able to include the SANC logo with their plant shipments. The logo shows they're meeting stringent growing, training, self-inspection and audit requirements to make their businesses stronger and more resilient against plant pests and diseases, changes in regulations, quarantines and the threat of stop-sales or recalls.

"A unique partnership involving plant regulators and the horticulture industry, SANC is poised to benefit plant growers, retailers, installers, consumers and the environment," said Craig Regelbrugge, AmericanHort senior VP. "We and our Horticultural Research Institute foundation are deeply committed to the effort as the pilot continues."

Dana Rhodes, SANC Program Chair—National Plant Board, added, "It is exciting to see nurseries, greenhouses and states partnering in SANC. I believe this program allows states and green industry members to strengthen their relationships and provide healthy plants throughout the U.S."

The two nurseries are part of a first group of eight facilities nationally participating in a pilot project for the SANC program. All have embraced the envisioned processes of the SANC program, which are designed to integrate into a business' day-to-day and long-range operations. The other nurseries are in New Jersey, Georgia, Missouri, Oklahoma, Oregon and Washington, and represent a diversity in business size and type of operations. Additional nurseries will be coming online soon to further explore the SANC program utility and benefits.

According to McKay Nursery Company head of production Tom Buechel, "Our employees have enjoyed the high honor and privilege to be involved in the Systems for Approach to Nursery Certification pilot and work

with other growers, other states, the National Plant Board and AmericanHort to make it a reality. We realize that being certified comes with the responsibility to train for and earn the SANC certification emblem each day. The program has engaged all our staff to continually and proactively address plant health issues before they arise and to embrace the teamwork needed to grow quality nursery stock. We are very proud to be part of the new movement towards the safeguarding of plants.”

John Rausch, COO at Star Roses and Plants, said, “We are proud to be involved, and to have achieved, this important milestone. We were privileged to work with industry consultants Jerry Lee and Darrell Maddox, and Dana Rhodes from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, toward developing the framework of the SANC program, which is now institutionalized in what we do every day.”

More information, including a link to an ongoing AmericanHort webinar series, is available at:

<http://sanc.nationalplantboard.org/>. **GT**