

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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HRI Needs You!

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HRI: Most greenhouse growers don't know what that stands for. I didn't until OFA started to talk with ANLA about merging with them back in 2008. I think that HRI might be the most important three-letter acronym our association should know in the future.

HRI stands for Horticultural Research Institute. It's been funded and managed mostly by the nursery segment and it's something they should be proud of. With a corpus of roughly \$12 million, it donates \$200,000 to \$300,000 a year in research grants. What's most amazing about this is that there is no government funding. It's all from inside our industry. Some very generous companies and individuals have contributed very large sums of money to keep this growing and keep the nursery industry growing, too.

But as Lorence Wenke of Wenke Greenhouses and I were asking ourselves recently (we sit on the 22-person HRI Board together), where is the greenhouse segment? Why are greenhouse growers not more involved with supporting HRI?

HRI is now managed by AmericanHort so, in essence, it's part of us. It's why we created AmericanHort from the merger of OFA and ANLA: to unite all the segments under one umbrella so we continue to have a strong voice, even though our numbers are small.

The main thing I want to stress is that the greenhouse segment needs to pitch in, so we can create a larger corpus and, in return, earn more grant money for research that will address issues that affect all of our businesses.

Some observations:

- The nursery and greenhouse supply chain generates billions of dollars in revenue, but for critical issues that affect us, we don't donate nearly enough. Why?
- There is no other revenue source that can support research specifically targeted for our industry and that we direct.
- Raise your hands if you think the government will be contributing more money in the future to address issues

that affect our
segments.

- I just ask that you go to the HRI website and see how much it's done for the industry and consider contributing in the future. If you don't, who will?

Check out <http://hriresearch.org> and consider contributing! **GT**