

GROWERTALKS

JZ on D.C.

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New OSHA Program to Protect Workers From Heat Illness & Injuries

Jennifer Zurko

In April, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration launched a new National Emphasis Program to protect workers from heat illness and injuries. OSHA will conduct heat-related workplace inspections before workers suffer "completely preventable" injuries, illnesses or, even worse, fatalities. To do so, OSHA will initiate inspections in high-risk industries in indoor and outdoor work settings when the National Weather Service issues a heat warning or advisory for a local area.

On days when the heat index is 80F or higher, OSHA inspectors and compliance assistance specialists will engage in "proactive outreach and technical assistance" to help employers keep workers safe on the job. Inspectors will look for and address heat hazards during inspections.

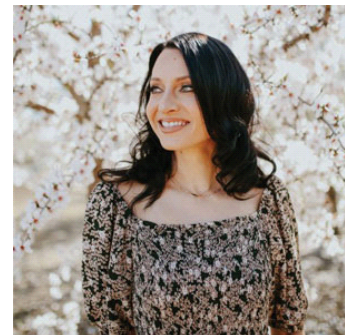
For the first time, OSHA now has a nationwide enforcement mechanism to proactively inspect workplaces for heat-related hazards in general industry, maritime, construction or agriculture operations alleging hazardous exposures to heat (outdoors and/or indoors). This means OSHA can now launch heat-related inspections on high-risk worksites "before workers suffer preventable injuries, illnesses or fatalities."

Read a fact sheet on OSHA's National Emphasis Program to protect workers from the threat of heat-related illness and injury at [osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov).

—Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association

AmericanHort Welcomes New Director of Advocacy & Government Affairs

In April, AmericanHort announced the hiring of Sara Neagu-Reed as Director of Advocacy & Government Affairs. She joins the Washington, D.C.-based advocacy team working alongside Craig Regelbrugge, Executive Vice President-Advocacy, Research & Industry Relations; and Evan Lee, Director of Policy & Government Relations. Sara fills an advocacy staff vacancy created with the recent departure of Tal Coley, who was named last month as the new CEO for the Florida Nursery,



Growers & Landscape Association.

Sara joins AmericanHort after a decade of working in various government affairs and legislative roles. Prior to joining AmericanHort, she served as Associate Director of Federal Policy for the California Farm Bureau Federation, where she advocated for the interests of California farmers and ranchers before Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

Prior to that, Sara served as Senior Legislative Analyst for the USDA and as a legislative assistant for the National Corn Growers Association. Her career began as a District Representative for a California member of the U.S. House of Representatives, where she served as principal liaison to local businesses, organizations and constituents, managing local policy issues.

“Sara’s strong and relevant work experience advocating on federal issues, most recently with the California Farm Bureau Federation, will be a strong asset to AmericanHort as we continue to build out our advocacy portfolio,” said Craig. “We look forward to her contributions toward influencing the issues most important to our industry.”

—JZ

AmericanHort Rallies Support for Nursery and Floriculture Research

With the new budget cycle underway, AmericanHort has begun mobilizing support on Capitol Hill for the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative (FNRI).

FNRI is a program designed to guide and leverage research through USDA and U.S. academic institutions, targeted to the needs of the floriculture and nursery industry. Initially established in 1996 via appropriations language, FNRI’s areas of research have included improving horticulture’s environmental and resource management practices, advancing insect, disease and weed management, and supporting greater efficiencies in horticultural production systems.

FNRI is a unique program within USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS), in that the process to identify priorities includes industry input provided by AmericanHort, its Horticultural Research Institute foundation, the Society of American Florists and American Floral Endowment. Research is conducted by USDA-ARS scientists and land grant university collaborators.

The program is currently funded at \$5.5 million, split roughly equally between university and ARS researchers, and roughly in half between floriculture and nursery projects. AmericanHort’s request to Congress this year is for an additional \$2 million, the program’s first funding increase in five years. Increased funding will support higher staffing and equipment costs while adding capacity for exploring innovative labor-saving and input-reducing technologies.

AmericanHort’s lobbying efforts to date have included outreach to 27 Senate and House key lawmakers, including leveraging our grassroots presence in their states and districts. The road ahead is long and will require a sustained effort, with Congress unlikely to finalize spending bills for fiscal year 2023 until after the midterm elections. Look for updates along the way!

—Evan Lee, *Director of Policy and Government Relations, AmericanHort*

Share your thoughts, opinions and news with me: jzurko@ballpublishing.com.