



Tim Hodson, Editorial Director
(847) 391-1019 • thodson@sgcmail.com

How Do The Numbers Add Up?

Last month, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released its most recent report on floriculture crops. The entire 115+ page report, "Floriculture Crops 2006 Summary," is a very comprehensive statistical analysis of the industry.

The data for the report is based on statistical information provided by growers in the 15 largest floriculture producing states. Last year, the report was based on information provided by growers from 36 states. Only growers with annual gross sales exceeding \$10,000 were included in the study.

The Growing Industry Appears To Be Shrinking

So what do the numbers say? According to the study, growers aren't growing like they used to. The report says the wholesale value of floriculture crops dropped 4 percent in 2006 versus sales in 2005. Sales in 2006 were \$4 billion compared to \$4.15 billion in 2005.

The total number of growers also decreased last year. The 2006 totals were down 9 percent. In 2005, there were 7,178 growers in the 15-state program, but in 2006 that number was 6,546. California remains the number-one state when it comes to production, while Florida is number two. Combined, the two states make up more than 45 percent of total market value.

Total covered area for floriculture crop production in 2006 was 5 percent less than it was the previous year. Production under shade and temporary cover was down 6 percent, while open ground production decreased 9 percent.

One area that did see an increase last year was in the "average peak number of hired workers employed" category. That figure was up 7 percent in 2006 with growers saying they had an average of 18.1 workers during the peak season in 2006. In 2005, growers said that number was 16.9 workers.

So I guess the USDA has confirmed it — operating costs (i.e. labor, energy, real estate) continue to rise while sales and profits continue to decrease. Does this sound familiar to you?

What are you doing to combat these trends? Let me know at thodson@sgcmail.com.

By the way, you can find the entire report online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Todays_Reports/reports/floran07.pdf.

Calling All Interns

Internships are a great way for a college student to experience the floriculture industry's "real world." These internships help provide college students with the practical knowledge they will need once they graduate and enter the working world.

GPN magazine and Nexus Corp. believe the success of today's students is critical to the future success of this industry. In fact, we believe it is so important that for the past eight years GPN has partnered with Nexus to present a scholarship to a worthy student that has served an internship in our industry.

Each year, the winner — chosen by a panel of industry experts — receives a check for \$3,000, an expense-paid trip to Short Course, along with a four-day registration to Short Course (compliments of OFA) and is the subject of the cover story of the January issue of GPN.

This is a wonderful opportunity for any students that may have participated in an internship program over the last year. So if you know any students that have successfully completed an internship and may be worthy of this honor, we would like to hear about them. They may be eligible for the scholarship. Check out the ad on page 55 detailing the requirements, application procedure and benefits of this scholarship program.

If you have any questions about the intern scholarship program, please feel free to contact our consulting editor, Dr. Jim Barrett, at jbarrett@ufl.edu or myself at thodson@sgcmail.com. We will be happy to answer your questions. 



Jeff Warschauer, Nexus Corp. (left) and GPN's Tim Hodson (right) recognize Alina Lovelace as Intern of the Year at OFA Short Course in Columbus, Ohio, last month.