Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative

A Brief Background

Third FNRI Researchers Conference
Cleveland, Ohio - October 14 – 16, 2009

The State of the Nursery Industry

- Economic recession – landscaping is down, product glut on the market, “woody” growers are hurting
- New efforts may help in the long-term. Climate change – can we sequester carbon? Can we improve cities through greenscaping?
- Reinvigorated regulatory climate
- “Sustainability” – a marketing tool. How is it affecting growers?
- New biotic (bad actors) appearing

The State of the Floriculture Industry

- “Color” is still selling – although the recession hurts here too
- Global trade is increasing – so are pests and diseases. It’s getting more difficult.
- Company consolidation is changing the industry. Syngenta, Ball, Fides, Dummen, Selecta operate internationally. We are growing from vegetative cuttings.
- Climate change legislation will hurt us. We are energy-intensive
- “Sustainability” – hitting us too.
- Dominance of the Big-Box Stores. Who wins?

The Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative:

A partnership of government, industry, and universities to obtain and guide Federal research dollars focused on industry's needs.

USDA Agricultural Research Service

Society of American Florists

American Nursery and Landscape Association/HRI

U.S. universities and botanical gardens

Why spend taxpayers' $$$ on such research?

- ✓ **Increase U.S. growers' efficiency and competitiveness.**
- ✓ **Help U.S. urban and rural economies.**
- ✓ **Improve Americans' quality of life via better plants and flowers.**
- ✓ **Research results may help other segments of agriculture.**

Why spend taxpayers' $$$ on such research?

- ✓ More effectively prevent spread of pests, invasive species and diseases via trade.
- ✓ Protect the environment.
- ✓ Enhance environmental restoration.

Respond to regulatory issues faced by industry.

Research Priorities for Initiative Funding

[eventual $20.7 million total permanent increase in ARS budget]

1. **Improve pest (insect, diseases, and weed) management practices and strategies.**

2. **Improve production system practices and strategies.**

3. **Improve environmental and resource management practices and strategies.**

Improve pest (insect, diseases, and weed) management practices and strategies

- ✓ **Eventually, $11.9 million, or 57% of total.**
- ✓ **Entomology research – Thrips, mites, root weevils, aphid/whitefly, mealy bugs, scale insects, and more.**
- ✓ **Pathology research – Root pathogens, *Botrytis*, Phytophthora, viruses, mildews, wilts, rusts, nematodes, and bacteria.**
- ✓ **Identify, detect, and control pests and diseases in trade.**

Improve production system practices and strategies.

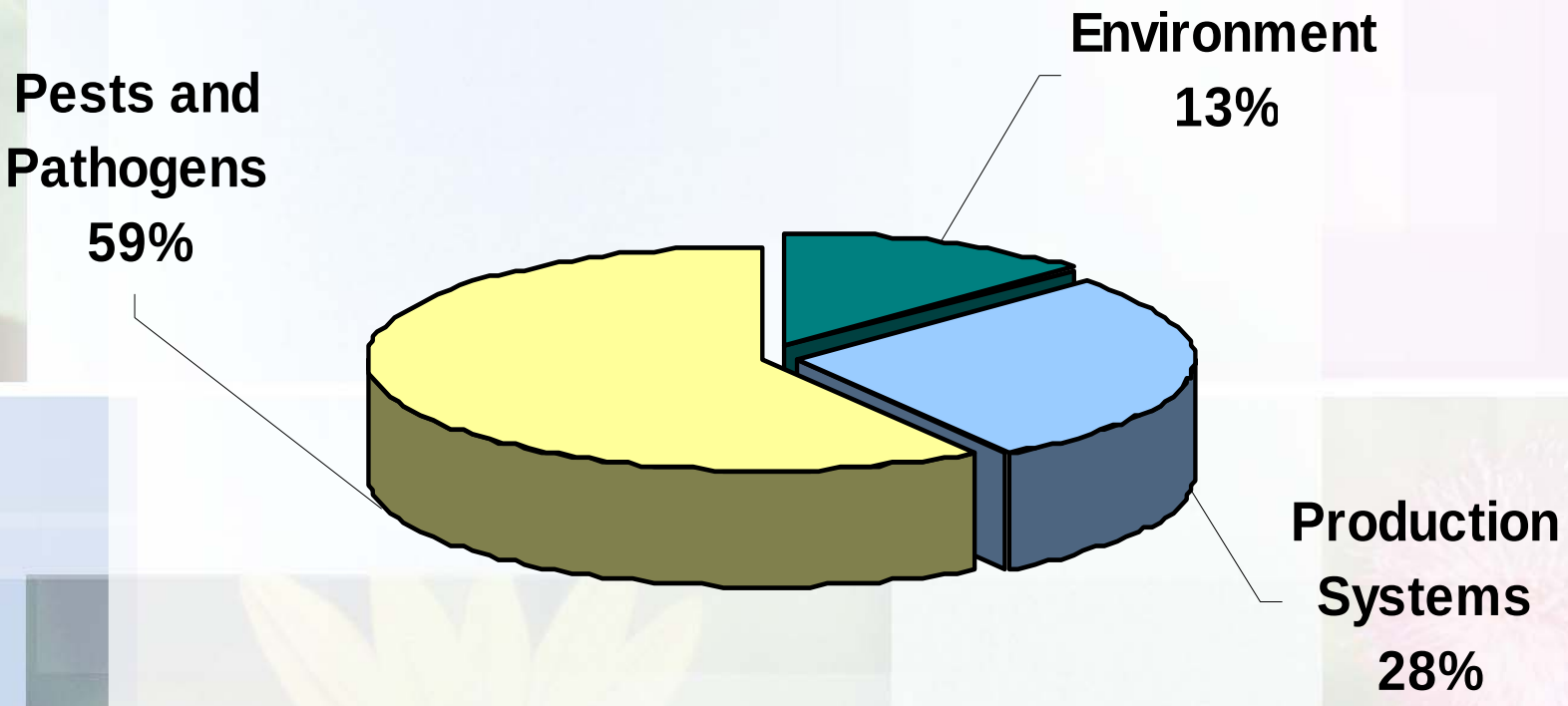
- ✓ **Eventually, $5.3 million, or 26% of total.**
- ✓ **Reduce production time and maximize plant quality and post-production performance.**

Improve environmental and resource management practices and strategies

- ✓ **Eventually, $3.5 million, or 17% of total.**
- ✓ **Reduce nitrate use, pesticide use, and runoff; improve remediation for industry wastes and other environmental problems.**
- ✓ **Develop systems for reduction, reuse, and recycling of wastes.**
- ✓ **Non-invasive cultivars.**

Current Allocation of Research Funding by Priorities

(Current total funding ca. $6.2 million)



Funding Mechanisms

- **USDA-ARS:** **Recurrent "permanent" base funding, multi-year, reasonably consistent. Supports "permanent" employees, operations, and infrastructure.**

- **Universities:** **Specific Cooperative Agreements with ARS, forming "temporary" ARS-University research teams. Supports "temporary" employees (post-docs, graduate students), and operations.**

Determining Funding Allocations

- **Congress may stipulate.**
- **Industry recommendations to ARS are consistent with the Initiative framework.**
- **Balance between floriculture-nursery, university/ARS, and numerous interests.**
- **Complementarity, so that Initiative resources build on other research.**

Characteristics of Funded Projects

- **Address Initiative priorities.**
- **Complement industry-funded research.**
- **Leverage other funding sources (NASA, ARS).**
- **Support long-term, coordinated efforts.**
- **New problems; emerging diseases and insects.**

FNRI is “industry-driven”

- **Focused on needs of producers.**
- **Not a competitive grants program—no annual solicitation of proposals – however new research topic suggestions welcomed**
- **Projects are often long-term (5 years)**
- **Industry committees provide frequent input regarding research relevance and direction:**
  - **SAF Initiative Task Force: Chair, Dave Niklas**
  - **ANLA/HRI Initiative Review Committee: Chair, Johnny Brailsford**

Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative: The Larger Context

Coordination with related efforts

- **Private industry foundations**
  - **American Floral Endowment (AFE) and the Gloeckner Foundation**
  - **Horticultural Research Institute, Inc. (HRI)**
- **IR-4 Ornamental Horticulture Program**
  - **Strong mutuality of information, research**
  - **Help with two APHIS-facilitated Task Forces: Q-Biotype Whitefly, Chilli Thrips**

The Initiative's continued success depends on communication, cooperation, and balance.

This presentation is the most recent effort to:

- **Communicate and consult with the research community and industry;**
- **Foster cooperation and collaboration; and**
- **Maintain a well-balanced research portfolio.**

Contacts

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