FULL NAME OF YOUR PROGRAM WORK TEAM (PWT):

Greenhouse Horticulture Program Work Team

Please list names, affiliations and e-mail addresses of the PWT Co-Chairs: (With an asterisk [*], please indicate the co-chair responsible for finalizing this report.)

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Please identify your PWT’s activities, accomplishments, and, most importantly, outcomes and impacts over the past year.

The Greenhouse Horticulture PWT provides Cornell extension programming to producers of greenhouse bedding plants, flower crops and greenhouse vegetable crops across New York. We support the green industry, which is 2nd in value of sales by ag commodity in NYS. Stakeholders from different facets of the greenhouse industry form a 15-person Advisory Board that meets once or twice a year with the PWT to help with planning and evaluation of applied research and extension programs at Cornell. During 2011, the Advisory Board met with the PWT at the NYS Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva and at Cornell in Ithaca on November 10-11. On the 11th we had a productive lunch meeting with Dean Kathryn Boor. A roundtable discussion was held with advisory board members weighing in on challenges and opportunities in the NYS greenhouse industry.

The Advisory Board requested programming that improves greenhouse business profitability via a) enhanced marketing and social media skills b) dependable new crops c) better integrated pest management (IPM) methods for insect and disease management, d) energy efficient production and e) education of garden center operators, and private and professional gardeners. These educational goals were addressed at the Seeley Conference (June 27-29) and the Floriculture Field Day (July 19) on campus. In addition, Long Island colleagues hosted an Agricultural Forum (January 13), a Floriculture Field Day and summer meeting of the Long Island Flower Growers’ Association (July 7), a Plant Science Day (September 8), and a Poinsettia Open House (December 15) reaching 335 attendees. Approximately 400 growers attended annual Nursery and Bedding Plant Schools held in the Buffalo area (January 11), Long Island (January 17), Capital District (February 22), and the Hudson Valley (February 23). PWT members routinely survey the greenhouse industry to determine their adoption of practices following outreach efforts. Results from the Hudson Valley school were typical; 73% of survey respondents (n=45) indicated that they planned practice changes based on what they had learned and 88% indicated their businesses’ profitability benefited from the school.
Phone conferences during the year were used to keep the members of the PWT in close communication at minimum cost. On April 28, extension educators around the state joined for a phone conference to discuss significant pest problems that had occurred during the spring growing season. Conference calls on March 1 and June 13 covered final plans for the summer Floriculture Field Day.

Cornell hosted the 26th national Seeley Conference on the Ithaca campus June 27-29, with the theme, “Floriculture’s biggest challenge: Create mindshare opportunities”. Speakers focused on topics relevant to reinvigorating consumer attention on floriculture products, including their relevance and benefits to our daily lives. Among the speakers, notables included Katy Moss Warner, president emeritus of the American Horticultural Society, on “Plant Blindness,” Adam Schwerner, director of gardens for the Chicago Park District, on “in your face horticulture”. The Seeley Conference is a think-tank event designed to encourage discussion of a topic important to the future of the floriculture industry by national and international industry leaders, and for 2011, 60 attended.

Cornell’s annual Floriculture Field Day was held on July 19 in Ithaca. More than 130 educators and industry reps attended – the highest attendance in recent history. The program centered on a marketing theme with speakers providing suggestions for selling at Farmer’s Markets, filling the organic niche, on-farm retail sales, and creative ways for wholesales to connect with the end consumer. Of the 47 evaluation respondents, 68% learned some tips they planned to implement at their own operation. The afternoon included Walkabouts (guided tours) with information on designing mixed containers that work, popular perennials, and disease management. Participants had the opportunity to view the new cultivars at the Bluegrass Lane research facility and we ended the day with an ice cream social and a local band. The 8th Annual Kathy Pufahl Memorial Container Design contest, a part of the Field Day, brought 12 noted NY and national industry experts to Ithaca as judges and provided a forum for learning and horticultural inspiration from the 23 entries. Winners and winning entries can be viewed at http://www.greenhouse.cornell.edu/container_contest/fieldday_2011.htm.

The Greenhouse Horticulture PWT organized a ¾ day track for the CCE Agriculture and Food Systems In-service held in Ithaca November 15-17. Sessions were held in conjunction with the Sustainable Horticulture PWT track.

The NYS IPM Ornamentals Team, and other PWT members, held the 4th annual IPM In-depth hands-on workshop on July 18 to give growers coming to Ithaca for the Field Day an additional educational opportunity. Based on input from previous attendees, it was expanded to a 6 hour program. Twenty-eight participants had a chance to get hands-on experience with whiteflies, plant viruses and diagnosing nutrient deficiencies. About
half had participated in previous summer In-depth programs and practice changes that they noted included improved observation and monitoring, better pest identification and changes in soil and fertility practices. With funding from NY Farm Viability Institute, similar IPM In-depth workshops were held in association with 4 CCE offices across the state. Of the 94 growers who attended the IPM In-depth hands-on ornamental workshops, 80 learned information that they planned to incorporate into their businesses and 84% of those who had attended previous IPM programs had already incorporated what they learned into their production.

The PWT’s websites, www.greenhouse.cornell.edu and www.longislandhort.cornell.edu, continue to be used as sources of information for growers and educators. *Elements of IPM for Greenhouses in NYS* are at www.nysipm.cornell.edu. Bulb crop research results are available online and on CD. *Cornell Guidelines for the Integrated Management of Greenhouse Floral Crops*, the *Pest Management Guide for the Production and Maintenance of Herbaceous Perennials* and the *Pest Management Guide for the Production and Maintenance of Trees and Shrubs* were updated for 2011 with the assistance of PWT members. Numerous articles were prepared for *LI Hort News, Greenhouse IPM Notes, Hudson Valley Horticulture Newsletter, Capital District Growing Trends Newsletter* and other extension newsletters, the *NYSFI Newsletter*, the *Ornamentals IPM e-Newsletter* and for national trade magazines. The ornamentals program of NYS IPM has a Twitter feed. The *2010 Annual Report of the LIHREC*, including floriculture research relating to crop performance, plant pathology, entomology, and weed science is available online. The USDA/ARS, the American Floral Endowment, the Gloeckner Foundation, the Post/Schenkel Foundation, Friends of Long Island Horticulture, Hatch, Northeast IPM, NY Farm Viability Institute, NYS Flower Industries Research and Education Fund, EPA, NE-SARE, NYS IPM, and various horticultural industries provided external funding for the Cornell Greenhouse Horticulture Program in 2011.

Members of the PWT and Advisory Board provide service to the industry in many ways. In addition to their working directly with a large number of NYS growers, identifying problems and solutions, and analyzing samples, they are active in state, national and international programs.

They are members of the Northeast Greenhouse Conference Planning Board, academic reviewers for the New England Floriculture Grants Program and other organizations, and collaborate closely with New York State Flower Industries (NYSFl), and the Long Island Flower Growers through joint projects.