PRESS RELEASE

AmericanHort Welcomes USDA Funding for Plant Pest Solutions

Columbus, Ohio – USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has just released its plan for strategically deploying over $58 million in special Farm Bill funding to protect agriculture and horticulture from plant pests and diseases. The funds are provided via the 2014 Farm Bill's Horticulture title, a key legislative priority for AmericanHort.

"For many years, the Farm Bill has been about row crops and livestock, but a decade ago, Congress began to acknowledge the importance of specialty crops and horticulture in America," according to Craig Regelbrugge, AmericanHort senior vice president for advocacy and research. "Specialty crops represent half the value of all U.S. crop production, and our industry represents one-third of the total value of specialty crops. This program represents a wise investment in solutions to enable future success."

In total, 434 projects will be funded in 50 states and several U.S. territories. A few highlights especially important to AmericanHort and its research affiliate, the Horticultural Research Institute, include:

- The Horticultural Research Institute will receive $149,500 to support the continued development of the Systems Approach to Nursery Certification (SANC) project, in partnership with the National Plant Board and USDA. Eight nursery and greenhouse operations across the country are currently piloting this new approach to plant production and certification;

- Continued funding for the National Ornamentals Research Site at Dominican University of California (NORS-DUC), $509,283, as well as several specific research projects that will deliver needed tools and information to deal with threats such as *Phytophthora ramorum* and other challenges confronting the nursery sector;

- Numerous projects around the country in support of clean stock and harmonized certification programs for pome and stone fruit, citrus, grapes, berries, and roses; supporting the safe importation of new varieties; and orderly trade in planting stock for these high value crops;

- Several coordinated projects to address ongoing regulatory and production challenges associated with boxwood blight and downy mildew;

- Granular insecticide treatment efficacy work for Japanese Beetle and Imported Fire Ant in Compost-Amended Substrates;

- Best Management Practices for Control of Bacterial Gall, an emerging threat to *Loropetalum*, $39,600.

"USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is a strategic partner in protecting our industry and facilitating trade, and today's announcement is chock full of good news for our industry," Regelbrugge concluded. "We appreciate all the hard work on the part of USDA and the APHIS Farm Bill management team toward ensuring these funds are invested wisely on behalf of American agriculture and horticulture."

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AmericanHort was formed in 2014 by the consolidation of the American Nursery & Landscape Association and OFA – The Association of Horticulture Professionals. With a combined history of 220+ years, AmericanHort supports nearly 16,000 member and affiliated businesses that include breeders, greenhouse and nursery growers, garden retailers, distributors, interior and exterior landscape professionals, florists, students, educators, researchers, manufacturers, and all of those who are part of the industry market chain. The horticulture industry's production, wholesale, retail, and landscape service components have annual sales of $163 billion, and sustain over 1.15 million full- and part-time jobs. Our mission is to unite, promote, and advance the horticulture industry through advocacy, collaboration, connectivity, education, market development, and research. The association has offices in Columbus, Ohio for administration and member services, and in Washington, DC to facilitate government relations and research activities.