Growing Better: A Fresh Approach to Plant Certification
News from the National Plant Board

Certification of nursery stock for intrastate, interstate, and international shipping has become increasingly challenging both for industry and for regulatory agencies, due to higher shipping volumes, increasing regulated pest pressure, tougher shipping requirements, and dwindling resources. The National Plant Board (NPB), an organization of state plant regulatory agencies, is working collaboratively with the green industry to develop a Systems Approach to Nursery/Greenhouse Stock Certification (SANC) to provide alternatives to existing certification requirements.

What is SANC? SANC incorporates an audit-based systems approach concept into plant production and certification to reduce pest risk and distribution while facilitating and expediting the movement of nursery and greenhouse plants. SANC is about identifying critical control points (CCPs) in a production system and implementing best management practices (BMPs) to address the most impactful CCPs in order to decrease the likelihood of shipping pests or diseases. SANC is a voluntary alternative that may be used to augment or substitute the traditional (inspection-based) method of certification within a state certification program. The SANC approach is flexible enough to address the unique variations in plant production facilities in all regions of the country. For those who don’t participate, traditional programs will continue with business as usual for most states and nurseries.

SANC offers scalable benefits – from helping a small local nursery produce healthier plants to providing compliance verification for a nursery or greenhouse shipping regulated articles out of state.
SANC offers overall process improvement and long-term benefits – including reduction in pest risk, increased cost efficiencies, increased uniformity among state programs, and a tiered approach to certification that supports the expertise and economic means of individual producers and the market.

SANC offers direct value to you –
   Ease the time crunch during shipping season
   Save money with:
      • Reduced shipping inspection and certification costs
      • Reduced pest pressures and pest control costs
   Use a more effective approach to identifying and managing pest risk
   Grow healthier plants
   Build a better pest management system
   Gain a better understanding of state certification and import requirements
   Improve customer satisfaction
   …Perhaps even gain a marketing edge.

The SANC concept has been developed with participation of more than 20 state agencies and several industry and academic representatives. It is now time to road test those ideas. A SANC pilot program is being rolled out in the summer of 2014 with a very limited number of volunteer nursery and greenhouse operations in participating states. The pilot program will launch SANC into the real world and demonstrate the benefits of SANC certification. It will also identify areas where the initial SANC concepts can be strengthened and improved.

To learn more about participation in SANC, or just find out more about how SANC can help you manage pest risk, visit the National Plant Board website at sanc.nationalplantboard.org