



Wisconsin Certifies First Nursery in Pest Control Pilot Program

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MADISON – A Wisconsin nursery is one of the first two in the nation to be certified in a pilot program for issuing plant health certificates based on evaluating processes that reduce risk of pests and diseases, rather than on traditional visual inspections of nursery stock.

McKay Nursery Co., Waterloo, has been SANC-certified by the National Plant Board, an association of plant regulatory agencies in all the states. SANC stands for Systems Approach to Nursery Certification.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is a member of the National Plant Board. The department licenses nursery growers and dealers and certifies their products as pest-free for export to other states and nations.

"McKay is the state's largest nursery operation, and it's very complex," said Brian Kuhn, director of the department's Plant Industry Bureau. "We normally send five inspectors there once a year, for two to three days. Now, McKay has taken steps to identify and reduce the risks of introducing pests and diseases and is documenting those practices. We will audit those records annually, and have a much better understanding of their entire operation than we have from the snapshot of what the business looks like on inspection day."

SANC is an initiative of the National Plant Board along with AmericanHort®, the trade group for nursery businesses. Eight nurseries nationwide are participating in the pilot project. McKay is the first to complete the lengthy process of identifying the points in its operation that pose risks for introducing pests and diseases and developing "best management practices" to reduce those risks. McKay has worked closely with DATCP nursery regulatory staff throughout the process.

SANC will benefit state inspection authorities by focusing resources, and help participating nurseries by reducing their plant pest and disease problems and the costs of both emerging and ongoing pest problems.

Star Roses and Plants/Conard-Pyle, a Pennsylvania nursery, is the other soon-to-be SANC-certified nursery. Six other pilot nurseries should be completing the process by early 2017.

Other participants in the SANC initiative are the Society of American Florists; the Horticultural Inspection Society, a group made up of state nursery inspectors; and USDA Plant Protection and Quarantine.

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