FEDERAL ISSUE: **NURSERY INDUSTRY'S RESEARCH NEEDS**

POSITION: FNGLA urges full funding and implementation of USDA's Floriculture & Nursery Research Initiative.

BACKGROUND: Historically, only about one-half of one percent of the research budget of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) directly supported the nation's nursery and landscape industry. Yet, as the economic impact and role of the nursery & landscape industry gains recognition across the nation and in Florida, Congress and ARS are now increasingly willing to invest federal dollars to support the nursery and landscape industry's research needs.

FNGLA has identified the industry's research priority needs. Florida's nursery and landscape industry has a proud history of funding needed research through its own research grant programs (e.g., FNGLA's Endowed Fund at the University of Florida; FNGLA's Endowed Fund at the Horticulture Research Institute; and, the National Foliage Foundation administered by FNGLA). However, such efforts are financially limited and often geared towards applied research projects with near-term tangible results. The ARS Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative provides needed funding for investment in longer-term, basic research which the industry cannot underwrite on its own. Some of these dollars have found their way to Florida.

Congressional funds earmarked to the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative support work at ARS research facilities (e.g., the Horticultural Research Lab in Fort Pierce, FL), state land grant universities (e.g., the University of Florida-IFAS) and other institutions identified as "centers of excellence." The research targeted by the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative are determined by a national committee comprised of both ARS officials and floral & nursery industry leaders. The Initiative provides funds in the following research areas: nursery and floral crop production, post-harvest-handling, landscape success, pest management and environmental protection. The ARS Initiative directly reflects the industry's research priorities identified by FNGLA.

In 2004, Congress appropriated $6 million to this research initiative. Its long-term goal is to provide $20 million annually to ensure the industry's future growth and stability.