

Floriculture Sales Rise in Wisconsin, Dip in U.S.

Wisconsin's floriculture industry value of sales has continued to increase despite a declining number of growers. Wisconsin's gross wholesale value of sales for 2003 was estimated at \$82.3 million, 4 percent higher than the revised 2002 estimate of \$79.4 million. The National Agricultural Statistics Service assesses the industry's well being by summarizing the following floriculture products: cut flowers, potted flowering plants, bedding or garden plants, outdoor perennials, indoor foliage plants, and propagative material. Nursery products, trees, shrubs, and sod are not considered floriculture crops.

In 2003, there were 410 growers with sales at or exceeding \$10,000. While the overall number of producers declined by 36, there were 4 more producers reporting sales in excess of \$500,000 compared to a year ago. Bedding and garden plants accounted for \$52.8 million of sales, or 64 percent of the total Wisconsin floriculture sales. Although annuals make up almost two-thirds of this category, the greatest growth has been in perennials. Herbaceous perennial sales continued to increase, realizing a 16 percent increase over the previous year and a dramatic 50 percent leap since 2001. Sales of produced propagative material increased by 30 percent over 2002. Cut flower and foliage plant sales decreased while potted flower plants remained nearly unchanged.

Wisconsin's floriculture production area decreased in both covered area and open ground. Total covered area dropped 353,000 square feet to 10.5 million. Area under greenhouse structures decreased 405,000 square feet, while temporary and shade structures increased 13 percent to 465,000 square feet. A total of 431 uncovered acres were used for floriculture production, 25 acres less than 2002.

In 2003, the wholesale value of production in the United States decreased less than 1 percent to \$5.07 billion. Although each had a slight reduction in its overall value, California and Florida remained the largest producers accounting for 36 percent of the total sales. The top four states, California, Florida, Michigan, and Texas, accounted for \$2.46 billion, 49 percent of the total value. Bedding and garden plants, at \$2.42 billion, remained the largest contributor to the value of production, up 1 percent from the previous year. Total covered growing area was reduced by 3 percent to 929 million square feet while the number of growers fell by 8 percent to 11,913.