

**Summary Joint Strategic Plan
2020-2022
for The Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers and the
Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Research Foundation**

I. Vision

Cut flower growers supporting each other through education, community, and research.

II. Mission

Our mission is to support specialty cut flower growers by creating accessible educational opportunities and research for growers at every stage in their development of financially sustainable businesses. We build community through peer-to-peer learning and mentorship. We share an interest in environmental sustainability and the pursuit of personal and financial well-being and success.

III. Values

- ❖ We value education.
- ❖ We value community and collaboration.
- ❖ We value environmental sustainability.
- ❖ We value diversity and inclusion.
- ❖ We value members at all growing scales and experience levels around the world.
- ❖ We value science, particularly peer-reviewed research, and grower-led research.
- ❖ We value each member's pursuit of financial success and sustainability.
- ❖ We value the mental and physical well-being of farmers and farm workers in the cut flower industry.

IV. Programs and Strategic Initiatives

A. Education Program

The education program includes publications, in-person events, online learning opportunities, and a mentorship program.

During the period of this strategic plan the Association will work to refine current offerings, improve online offerings, map a strategy for partnering with other organizations to take advantage of federal funding, and provide more locally relevant and accessible opportunities to members.

B. Research Program

Current programs include on-farm research, academic research, and grower trials. These programs have not been formally evaluated to determine what if any long-term impacts

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have resulted from the Foundation's investments. As the cut flower industry continues to experience resurgent growth, we have new opportunities to partner with Land Grant institutions to leverage federal funds for larger research projects to benefit our membership. **During the period of this strategic plan the Foundation will undertake a formal evaluation of research funded to date and explore opportunities for new partnerships.**

During the period of this strategic plan the Foundation will explore new opportunities to support economic research, particularly to aggregate cut flower pricing information and economic benchmarks.

C. Membership Program

The membership program includes outreach to new members, and ongoing outreach and communications with existing members, as well as components of board development and governance. Member benefits currently include:

Member Pricing for Educational Opportunities: Members receive preferred pricing for educational events. The educational program, including member-only educational opportunities, is discussed above under education.

Peer-to-Peer Online Forums: Members have access to Facebook closed groups.

The Cut Flower Quarterly: This full-color magazine is a membership benefit and sent to members every quarter. This membership survey indicated members place a high value on this benefit. .

Marketing Information: The membership survey showed that members place great value on pricing and marketing information. Acquiring this information should fall under the research program, and disseminating it should fall under the education program.

Marketing Tools: The membership program includes access to an online marketing platform where members can identify their offerings, and buyers can search for flowers and related services. In order to determine if this activity is strategic for the organization we need to evaluate how much the website is used, and how much value it returns to members, the extent to which it increases membership, and the cost of the service compared to the membership revenue it generates.

Regionality: The Association's Board includes members who are elected through regional board members have responsibilities for representing membership interests at the regional level. This may translate to regional events. The membership

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survey made it clear that the membership is not aware of how the regional system is supposed to work, and that the system is inconsistent across regions. Members also placed a high value on regional and local events, however some indicated that growing zone was more important than region, and others suggested the regional map should be redrawn, and still others said that since the regions were so large there was not much difference in travel time and expense between going to a regional meeting or a national meeting.

During the term of this strategic plan, the first strategic priority for the organization relative to membership should be to understand the relationship between member benefits and membership fees, and to re-examine marketing the membership program in that context.

During the term of this strategic plan the issue of regionality needs to be explored in three ways:

- 1) how it affects board structure and governance;**
- 2) how it relates to membership experience and satisfaction; and**
- 3) how it relates to the deployment of educational programs.**

V. Strategic Initiatives Without Goals and Measures

Since this is the first formal strategic plan for the organizations, there are no baseline measures sufficient for management to establish goals, objectives, and measures for the period covered by the strategic plan. Instead, this strategic plan concludes by establishing four strategic initiatives, each with projects to be accomplished, but none with clear metrics indicating how we might measure success. The planning committee has also adjusted the time frame for the strategic plan from five years to three years. During the three-year period of this strategic plan management will develop the programs in sufficient detail to be able to update the strategic plan to include specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) goals. It is our expectation that in 2023 the organizations will have a five-year strategic plan with goals, objectives, and measures by program.

For the three-year period of this strategic plan the organizations will organize their work around four strategic initiatives as follows:

- 1) Education Initiative
 - a) Continue to provide in-person learning opportunities.
 - b) Continue to offer online informal learning opportunities.

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- c) Develop the education program to include new online learning opportunities and to support the mentorship program with formal learning opportunities.
 - d) Explore how to build a library of new and existing educational materials and how to market and price access to the library.
 - e) Consider the roles of partners in funding and executing educational work.
 - f) Develop evaluation measures and processes for the education program sufficient to support the organization in developing SMART goals for future work.
- 2) Research Initiative
- a) Develop the research program to integrate with the education program and meet members' needs for economic and marketing information as well as horticultural research.
 - b) Consider the roles of partners in funding and executing research work.
 - c) Develop evaluation measures and processes for the research program sufficient to support the organization in developing SMART goals for future work.
- 3) Membership Initiative
- a) Evaluate membership fees and benefits and adjust as indicated.
 - b) Develop a written outreach plan for membership communications.
 - c) Evaluate the regional structure of membership and board governance and adjust as indicated.
 - d) Develop evaluation measures and processes for the membership program sufficient to support the organization in developing SMART goals for future work.
 - e) Consider efforts to increase membership diversity.
- 4) Capacity-building Initiative
- a) Update board processes and procedures including board governance, structure, and training. This should be done in concert with the examination of the membership program and regionality.
 - b) Update accounting processes and procedures so that program divisions are clearly expressed and to develop the capacity to manage grants and contracts.
 - c) Update human resources management capacity to support an increase in staff.

V. Approval and Implementation

This plan was prepared by a strategic planning committee including three board members, the two senior staff members of the organization, and an outside consultant with industry expertise. The plan was informed by a detailed survey of membership and a formal evaluation of existing capacities. The board and a number of members were invited to review and comment on this summary joint strategic plan, and on a longer supporting document explaining background and context.

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The planning committee and the board were asked to evaluate the recommendations for the organization using the “balanced scorecard” approach or by attempting to balance four equally important overarching needs:

- ❖ Financial sustainability: How will the planned activities affect financial sustainability?
- ❖ Member services: How will the planned activities serve members?
- ❖ Internal capacity: What internal processes need to be developed or improved in order to implement the plan?
- ❖ Mission sustainability: How will the planned activities serve the organization’s mission in the long run?

The implementation plan for this strategic plan is a separate document containing action items and timelines. Once the strategic plan is approved, board and staff will be responsible for ensuring that the organization’s operations are aligned with the direction given in the strategic plan. By the end of the term of this strategic plan, the board should ensure that a new five-year strategic plan is in place, and that the plan includes specific metrics for measuring success.