



Position Statement on New Christmas Tree Checkoff Program ***NCTA & PCTGA Agree Good for Industry***

The National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA) is pleased that the USDA has announced a final rule on the creation of a Christmas Tree Promotion, Research and Information Order, commonly known as a "Checkoff."

The Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Growers Association (PCTGA) has been supportive of the process to approve the Checkoff Program and believes that it will be beneficial to the industry.

This program was **requested by the industry in 2009** and has gone through two industry-wide comment periods during which 565 comments were submitted from interested parties. More than 70% of the growers posting comments, and nearly 90% of the state and multi-state associations that posted comments indicated that they were in favor of the program. A group of Christmas Tree farmers and retailers spent nearly three years studying the potential positives and negatives of a checkoff promotion and research program, including looking at other commodities that have similar programs.

The program is designed to benefit the industry and **will be funded by the growers** at a rate of 15 cents per tree sold. The program will be administered by an independent 12-member **board of small business owners who grow and sell farm-grown Christmas trees** and they will be responsible for developing and approving promotional and research efforts to benefit the entire industry. **The program is not expected to have any impact on the final price consumers pay for their Christmas tree.** The funds collected after this season will be used to develop promotion and research programs for the 2012 season.

This program was developed under the Commodity Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996. There are at least **18 other similar programs already in effect for various agricultural commodities.** Although smaller in scope, the Christmas tree program will be similar to recognizable programs for milk, cotton and beef that have brought consumers commodity-oriented messages such as "Got Milk?" and "Beef, It's what's for dinner."

About the National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA)

NCTA is the professional organization representing nearly 5,000 farms and retailers engaged in growing and selling Real Christmas Trees to nearly 30 million consumers. Based in Chesterfield, Mo., NCTA's mission is to promote the use of Real Christmas Trees and support the industry that provides them. For more information:

www.realchristmastrees.org. Contact: Rick Dungey, 636-449-5071, dungey@realchristmastrees.org

About the Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Growers Association (PCTGA)

PCTGA represents over 250 growers of Pennsylvania Christmas trees. PCTGA works to promote and develop a community of interest among growers of Christmas trees in Pennsylvania and adjoining states, as well as to raise public awareness about Christmas trees. To find a Christmas tree grower near you, visit our website at

www.christmastrees.org. Contact: Stacy Zimmerman, 717-238-9765, communications@christmastrees.org