Press Release

Miami, FL- After many years of the Association of Floral Importers of Florida’s (AFIF) hard work on behalf of its members and the flower industry, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be expanding hours of service that will help expedite product through Miami’s airport and seaport. This will change the 66 year history of USDA only providing regular service during the hours of 8:00am to 4:30pm.

Back in 2010 the USDA opened a new large facility in Miami and AFIF wrote letters to USDA asking for expanded hours of operation to accommodate the specific needs of the flower industry. In September 2010, after receiving a ‘no’ response from USDA, AFIF asked twelve members of Congress to send a letter to the USDA director (see attached letter) about the need for hours to change in Miami to help support the members of AFIF and the need to expedite our products. Several of those members of Congress have continued to work closely with AFIF in pressuring USDA to change their long standing business policies and to provide additional hours of service.

In a May 6, 2013 letter from the South Florida Area Director, USDA, Pedro Millan advised AFIF and the industry that the USDA hours of operation will change in three phases over the next seven months.

**Phase I**: Starting Saturday, May 25th the Miami Inspection Station’s Diagnostic Lab will provide an entomologist on Saturdays from 0800-1630.

**Phase II**: Starting June 17th, the Miami Inspection Station will expand their hours of operation from 0600-1800, Monday through Friday.

**Phase III**: In January 2014 the Miami Inspection Station will be open on Saturdays with expanded hours and services from 0800-1630.

Overtime requests are still available for hours not covered by regular time. Overtime has to be requested by 2000 but can be performed whenever needed outside of the regular hours.

AFIF would like to thank the members of Congress who helped with this effort and the members of AFIF who continue to support the flower industry and the important issues that benefit the fresh cut flowers that we import and provide to consumers throughout the US.

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