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Inspiring consumers to buy more flowers

By

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Sure, we all buy flowers from time to time — for big events, on special holidays, to mourn the loss of a loved one — but is the every day consumer inspired to buy flowers simply “just because”? That’s the question Eric Fernandez, general manager of Continental Flowers, is asking — and the answer is one he’s hoping to change through the USDA Proposed Cut Flowers and Greens Promotional Order.

“I think a message to promote flowers on a larger scale makes people think about flowers a little bit more,” Fernandez told The Produce News. “We’re not asking people to buy flowers every week ,although we’d love that, but instead of just buying flowers twice a year, we want it to be something people are enjoying on a more regular basis.”

The proposed order is a way for the floral industry to create new consumers and demand for products by utilizing cost effective advertising strategies to create significant and scalable impressions.

“I think this promotional order has the ability to put a flower in every home and make people think about buying flowers more often, instead of just on occasions they’ve become synonymous with,” Fernandez said.

Fernandez is a member of the drafting committee that was formed across the floral industry to create the proposed promotional order. The 12-person board consists of five domestic producers, five importers, one non-voting mass-market retailer, and one non-voting traditional florist retailer. The committee began meeting in January of 2021 and has since been finalizing the main elements of the order and presenting it to the industry for feedback and revisions.

“At this point, we’re seeing what the next step is,” Fernandez shared. “It has not been submitted to USDA yet.”

The promotional order to fund generic cut floral and cut greens advertising has an estimated fund size of \$15 million based on estimate of imports and domestic floral production. The goals are to generate new consumers and sustainable consumption across all floral retail points; create a collaborative campaign to benefit all industry participants; utilize messaging to provide authenticity to marketing campaigns; take advantage of digital and guerrilla marketing techniques to get the highest ROI on advertising expenditures; and communicate with the floral industry on a regular basis the marketing actions and observed results.

The main elements of the promotional order are as follows:

Assessment rate:

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- Importers of record — 1 percent of import border value
 - Domestic Producers — 0.505 of farm gate value

Board Composition:

- Five seats for domestic producers
- Five seats for importers
- One non-voting seat for mass market retailer
- One non-voting seat for traditional florist retailer

Constituency:

- Importers and domestic producers that have a minimum revenue of \$100,000 can vote and participate in the administration of the Promotional Order. Those companies with revenue less than \$100,00 will not be assessed.

Domestic Allocation:

- Two to three percent of annual funds will be allocated to domestic organizations who apply for funding.

Voting Procedure:

- Referendum administered by USDA
- For passage, a simple majority of both the eligible domestic producers and importers must vote in favor.

Length of order:

- A referendum to renew the order must occur four years after passage.

For more information on the Proposed Cut Flowers and Greens Promotional Order, or to find out how you can get involved, visit

www.Floralboard.org.

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