





This project is funded by a Specialty Crop Block
Grant from the United States Department of
Agriculture.



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture





Table of Contents

Project Summary.....	4
Industry History.....	5
WA Cut Flowers.....	6
Research.....	7
GAP.....	8
SWOT.....	9
Supply Chain.....	10
Opportunities.....	11
Marketing-IMC.....	12
Special Thanks.....	13
Advisory Team.....	14



Washington Cut Flowers are grown and sold year-round, statewide. A Collaborative Effort to Advance the Washington Cut Flower Industry is a joint project of the Washington Department of Agriculture & the Washington Farm Bureau.



Project Summary

WASHINGTON CUT FLOWERS

"A Collaborative Effort to Advance Washington State Cut Flowers" is a partnership between the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and Washington Farm Bureau (WFB). The project aims to advance the marketing of local cut flowers.

A comprehensive industry assessment includes literature research, stakeholder research, an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee and primary & secondary producer, supplier and consumer research.

An Integrated Marketing Campaign (IMC) will raise general consumer awareness about the beauty & quality of

WA-grown flowers with engagement of the floral supply chain (florists, grocery and farmers markets). The project also offers producer technical assistance and educational opportunities and events for growers, supply chain as well as for consumers.

The project Objectives:

Objective 1 : Research and report on marketing best practices within the cut flowers industry and gather scientifically-respected benchmark marketing data to advance the interests of industry stakeholders.

Objective 2: Increase consumer awareness of where their flowers come from and build demand for locally-grown cut flowers with end consumers and within the floral industry with a strategic integrated marketing communications campaign.

Washington Flowers

*Essential for nature,
indispensable for
nurture.*



California supplies 72% of domestic cut flower market in the US with \$325 million in annual sales & Washington is the second largest producer with \$25 million in annual sales.

Objective 3: Assist new and established producers with cut floriculture marketing and business development opportunities.

INTERNATIONAL CUT FLOWERS

The cut flower industry is international, dynamic and a fast growing industry.

The Netherlands dominated the flower growing market in the '80s with new varieties. With the advent of affordable overnight airfreight, imports from Central and South American countries increased as they took a lion's share of the traditional, domestic cut flower market. In the U.S., the once-profitable production of standard crops like mums, carnations, and roses has been supplanted by nontraditional and specialty cut flowers. The disruptive nature of global floral has forced the U.S. cut flower market to change dramatically over the years.

Though large quantities of cut flowers are imported into the U.S. from Central and South America, Holland, Africa and the Caribbean, there is still a place (and profit) in the cut flower business for savvy growers. Some relatively

high-dollar-value crops do not ship well and are best produced locally. Local production usually equals longer vase life. As interest in locally grown food has skyrocketed, consumers are also paying attention to the proximity of other products. One of the most dramatic increases has been in the demand for locally grown wedding and event flowers.

SPOTTING OPPORTUNITY

With 80% of all cut flowers being sourced outside of the United States -mostly in Africa, Holland and Central and South America, American flower farmers have gravitated to the specialty cut varieties that source best locally: Dahlias, Peonies, Anemones, Ranunculus, Clematis, Sweet Peas, Lisianthus and others.

The specialty cut flower market in California produces the majority of domestic cut flowers.

California supplies 72% of the domestic cut flower market in the United States with \$325 million in annual sales and Washington is the third largest producer with \$25 million in annual sales. With its Mediterranean climate, year-round indoor and outdoor growing, and mature and massive supply chain infrastructure, California is in a league of its own in terms of scope of cut flower production.

Industry History



Nevertheless, Washington has evolved and adapted into a significant cut flower player in the market from its internationally-renowned tulip and daffodil farms, to its myriad of specialty cut flower producers who supply fresh, local, fragrant blooms of the highest quality and broadest longevity.

Washington Flowers

**The Washington state cut
flowers industry consistently
ranks in the top five
producing states in the US.**

Washington's many flower farmers have a sophisticated understanding of their numerous competitive advantages in the floral marketplace relative to imported flowers. Local flower farmers have implemented strategies to build on their strengths through differentiation of their products as local, unique, highest quality, and the freshest possible. Furthermore, most of the flowers local farmers focus on are those that do not ship well or those with shorter post-harvest vase lives.

Longer vase life, unparalleled quality, higher percentages of usable flowers, and a wider choice of varieties and colors continue to fuel production and stock the supply chain.

Washington's mass and specialty cut flower growers are filling niche markets as well as tapping into the needs and demands of designers and industry tastemakers. Consumer demand for the unusual and high quality blooms grown in Washington continues to grow, but still needs assistance to mature and broaden its scope. It is the purpose of this project to grow the industry and to simply sell more Washington-grown cut flowers. Furthermore, we aim to equip the industry with marketing tools.





Flower Research



CONSUMER RESEARCH -(BLUE RESEARCH)

Blue Research was contracted to conduct consumer research. A hybrid approach utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods was used. The qualitative research engaged two focus groups in a blind study (sponsor not disclosed). Thirteen total participants were video recorded and observed by project stakeholders. Quantitative research consisted of a 10-minute on-line survey of flower-consuming Washingtonians. Statistical significance was achieved with 402 completed surveys and a 95% confidence interval.

Some of the research highlights revealed:

- Over half of Wash. consumers buy fresh cut flowers; frequency & expenditures vary
- Over half report purchasing flowers in the past year; 3 in 5 expect to purchase in the next 12 months
- Grocery stores lead in purchase location- driven by convenience
- Convenience & cost are the two primary purchase factors
- Four in 5 do not consider locally-grown important when deciding where to buy

- Where flowers are grown is often unknown but could become important
- Participants say that Promoting locally-grown flowers could influence purchases
- Flower selection is most often driven by color, type, cost and/or longevity.
- Participants expect local flowers to be higher quality, distinctive and grown near point of sale

The full report offers a more in-depth view of the subject.



GAP Report

THE STATE OF THE CUT FLOWER INDUSTRY

Qualitative and quantitative research unearthed a Wash. cut flower industry that is evolving and finding what it is best at and sticking to it. Nevertheless, the Wash. cut flowers industry can learn and grow from this industry assessment- one that identifies best practices and opportunities for growth.

A SUPERIOR PRODUCT KNOWN BY SOME

Washington cut flowers are a superior product of the highest quality, locally and sustainably grown, with superior longevity, fragrance, and are unique specialty blooms.

Approximately 300 Washington cut flower growers produce more than \$25 million in local blooms each year. They range in size from the small road side stand to the large growers of Skagit Valley where, more tulips, daffodil and iris bulbs and cut flowers are grown than any other place in all of America.

Research shows that niche markets, stakeholders and tastemakers are aware of and agree on the excellence of Wash. cut flowers, but the general consumer is overall unaware of the origin of their flowers and the overall story behind their flowers,

A FRAGMENTED SUPPLY CHAIN

The local food movement over the past several decades has enabled producers and consumers to connect - expanding direct and regional sales and adding value with information about where and how food is grown. However cut flowers has not kept pace, nor experienced the scope and range of good will and benefits of the local food movement. Furthermore, the conventional supply chain largely excludes local flowers and there are but a few wholesale floral houses that supply local blooms.



The following table is an assessment of the Washington cut flower industry as informed by primary and secondary research. In-depth interviews and discussions were conducted with a wide range of industry stakeholders-including Advisory Team members, industry participants and tastemakers.

STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Superior product• Diverse group of producers• Washington enjoys a hyper-local/sustainable focus which can be leveraged by flowers• Flowers grown in Washington state benefit consumers through proximity and fresher product	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fragmented, undeveloped supply chain• WA-grown flowers are not always competitive with imports on price• Local industry marketing is disorganized and fragmented• No Washington state cut flower association or commission to unify the industry
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Washington enjoys a hyper-local/sustainable focus which can be leveraged by flowers• Stakeholder recognition and opportunity to create a "local"/"WA-grown" cut flower brand• Consumers who are open to being educated about their flowers	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imports continue to drown out the WA flower market.• Producers do not grow sales & stop providing fresh cut flowers because of business operating expenses, lack of revenue• Consumers remain uneducated on local fresh flower availability, quality & longevity



Supply Chain Research

Washington cut flower producers, suppliers-wholesalers, grocery, mass market, farmers markets, florists and end consumers complete the supply chain.



Producers

A 29-question cut flowers producer survey was sent out to more than 200 producers and collected 68 responses. Here are some of the main messages producers are communicating:

- The top three messages producers want to communicate to consumers to sell more WA-grown flowers are: It's a local product-grown in WA, the seasonality message-certain varieties of flowers are available in specific seasons and knowing the farm/farmers stories.
- The top marketing mechanisms preferred by producers to help them sell more WA-grown cut flowers are: Social media posts-(Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook), bouquet stickers identifying WA-grown product and on-line and television advertising.

Suppliers

The most frequent responses from supply chain interviews of florists and grocery floral managers in terms of sourcing, promoting & selling local floral product were:

- We need help sourcing local flowers; especially in Eastern Washington where local wholesalers sell mostly conventionally-grown flowers
- We need local flowers to "come to us" - have a delivery method
- We need help with telling the local story
- We need help making it profitable for all parties
- Sales, promotion & education collateral would help us sell more locally-grown flowers
- We need to be able to have access to a regular, year-round supply of local flowers at the quality standards we expect and get from conventional sources (concern over pests/bugs)

Many opportunities have been identified as a result of this project research, however given the scope and budget of this project, not all of these opportunities will be implemented.

Opportunities

Opportunities Identified as a Result of Washington Cut Flower Research

1. Ensure a strong presence and availability in preferred purchase locations: - grocery and convenient locations.
2. Compete aggressively on price.
3. If viable, use longevity as a differentiator.
4. Consider launching a branded campaign to educate consumers and drive preference.
5. Grow the year-round, WA-grown cut flower product through increased numbers of producers and/or increased volume with current producers.
6. Establish an association or cut flower commission to support and unify industry efforts.
7. Develop an Eastern Washington cut flower wholesale house with a full-range of delivery options in order to meet the demand and availability of local suppliers (particularly Tri-Cities area).
8. Learn from the local food movement and partner with them to sell more local flowers.





Integrated Marketing Communications Campaign Ideas

Producers:

- Multiple producer/supplier "Meet & Greet"
- Targeted collateral

Florists:

- Multiple producer/supplier "Meet & Greet"
- Targeted collateral

Grocery:

- Pilot program with Northwest Grocers (NWG)
- Targeted collateral



Farmers Market Managers/Vendors:

- Multiple producer/supplier "Meet & Greet"
- Targeted collateral
- Education

An Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) campaign is in the planning stages. Informed by a bevy of research, we are creating strategically-aligned marketing messaging and collateral- (Tools) to be executed through the most effective channels, by the most effective means- (Tactics). A customizable IMC Tool Kit will be made available to producers, members of the supply chain and other stakeholders. Consumer education and marketing messaging will be a high priority as the IMC continues to be developed. Furthermore, the IMC will leverage some of the opportunities and best practices gained from the industry assessment.



Paul Abel & Cecil Boss

Blue Research

Research consultants conducting primary & secondary consumer research for the WA Cut Flowers project.

Debra Prinzing

Slow Flowers

Floral author, speaker, blogger, founder of Slow Flowers, project consultant & Ad Hoc Advisory team member.

Vicki McCracken, PhD

Washington State University

Professor and Associate Director, School of Economic Sciences, Business College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resources. Researcher & advisor for previous SCBG cut flower project.



Advisory Team



Advisory Team

- Sarah & Steve Pabodie, Triple Wren Farms
- Emily Asmus, Welcome Table
- Diane Szukovathy, Jello Mold Farm
- Colleen Donovan, WSFMA
- Leah Newman-Bell, Pike Place Market
- Molly Sadowsky, Seattle Wholesalers Growers Market
- Erin Sheckelford, Camas Designs
- Tonya Berge, Berge's Blooms
- Alex & Jeanette De Goede, De Goede Bulb Farm, Skagit Valley Bulb Farm



Advisory Team

- Vicki McCracken, WSU
- Debra Prinzing, Slow Flowers
- Mark Berglund, Washington Floral Services
- Amy Johnson, Washington Floral Services

Advisory Team

- Patrick Goldberg, Skyline Flower Growers
- Dan Pearson, Dan's Dahlias
- Gonzalo & Maria Ojeda, Ojeda Farms
- Beth Mort, Snapdragon Flower Farm
- Carolyn Kulb, Folk Art Flowers

Katie Lynd

Former WSDA, PM

While Katie Lynd has moved on to her next season of her career, many thanks to Katie for her stellar leadership, management and investment in the Cut Flower project. Katie has made herself available to the project as a valued advisor.



WA-FLOWERS...

Unique
Special
Washington-Grown
Superior Quality
Superior Scent
Superior Longevity
Local and Sustainable
Farm Fresh

