

FSI Board approves certification scheme for small-scale growers

After consultation with stakeholders, the FSI board has approved a revised scheme for the certification of small-scale growers. This scheme incorporates feedback from small-scale growers, including adjustments and simplifications of the criteria and rules, with specific attention to reducing administrative burdens and costs. Recently, growers and traders agreed that, in the future, only certified flowers and plants will be offered and purchased.

The development of the small-scale grower scheme has made significant progress over the past summer. During the summer, a revised scheme, proposed by a working group consisting of FSI, GLOBALG.A.P., MPS, and Royal FloraHolland, was presented to growers. Thanks to the input from this group, adjustments were made, resulting in a scheme approved by the FSI board. The small-scale grower scheme enables small-scale growers to meet FSI requirements with a scheme specifically tailored to their operations.

Jeroen Oudheusden, Director of FSI: "To arrive at a final scheme with accompanying rules, a successful consultation round was conducted over the summer on the draft rules and criteria. We received 185 completed forms and a wide range of responses. This demonstrates the great commitment of the floriculture sector to this initiative. Additionally, the insights and comments that were collected were carefully analyzed and processed. This allows us to address the concerns and needs of small-scale growers regarding certification, removing as many barriers as possible."

In the coming months, the final scheme will be completed by the end of 2024 as planned, after which the new scheme will be offered by the scheme holders MPS and GLOBALG.A.P. Oudheusden: "On behalf of FSI and the involved parties, I would like to sincerely thank all participants for their input, commitment, and efforts. With this new scheme for this specific target group, we again demonstrate that we are working together towards a transparent and future-proof floriculture sector."

Consultation Round

During the consultation round, all involved parties had the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed rules and criteria. The responses ranged from technical comments on the criteria and their readability to suggestions regarding audit rules. One example of a technical comment concerned the relevance of water registration, water management plans, and energy plans for small-scale outdoor growers. As a result of the consultation, some of these checkpoints were removed from the scheme. In addition, certain checkpoints were revised to make them clearer and more readable. This input has helped to tailor the scheme to the needs of small-scale growers and support them in transparent, more efficient, and sustainable business operations.

Concerns About Feasibility

In addition to many positive reactions, some critical feedback was also received. Some participants expressed concerns about certain aspects of the scheme, such as the feasibility for specific growers and potential costs. "We have, of course, taken these critical comments seriously and carefully looked at ways to address these issues so that the scheme remains achievable and accessible to the involved parties," said Oudheusden.