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## State Agriculture Commissioner Announces Streamlined Inspection Process for New York's Plant Industry



### ***Plant Industry in NYS Ranks 9th in the Nation and Contributes \$413 Million to the State's Economy***

### ***New Mobile App Improves Efficiency and Consistency of State Inspections for Plant Growers and Dealers Statewide Provides More Detailed and Comprehensive Inspection Reports that Will Better Identify and Track Potential Threats to the State's Horticulture Industry***

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Richard A. Ball today announced a new mobile application to streamline the state inspection process for New York's nearly 9,000 nurseries, greenhouses, and retail markets where plants and flowers are grown or sold. The app, developed by the New York State Office of Information Technology Services, will improve the efficiency and consistency of the Department's inspections, providing the horticulture industry with quicker and more comprehensive analysis and inspection results. New York's horticultural industry is a strong part of the state's economy, ranking 9th in the country and contributing over \$413 million in annual wholesale sales of greenhouse and nursery-grown plants.

"Our horticulture industry is key to the growth of the agricultural community and this new inspection process is an exciting opportunity to help our plant growers and dealers continue to thrive," said Commissioner Ball. "By increasing efficiency, our inspectors are able to provide more detailed and thorough reports to plant growers and dealers across the State, which will also help us better support and protect the industry."

"We are pleased to partner with the Department of Agriculture and Markets to improve productivity in the field and transform the way New York's agriculture professionals work," said Richard Valenti, Enterprise Business Solutions Cluster Chief Information Officer. "The new Plant Inspection Mobile Application supports New York's growing agricultural industry through the deployment of a powerful management tool that allows for greater precision in reporting, increased efficiency, and improved communication within this important sector."

New York boasts some of the premier greenhouse production facilities in the United States, shipping cuttings and plugs throughout the country. From Western New York to Long Island, New York's nurseries provide quality plants, including fruit trees, for retailers, landscapers and homeowners across the state.

The Division of Plant Industry oversees the health of these plants sold throughout New York State. The new mobile App allows the Department's more than 35 horticultural inspectors in the Division to electronically log and file all-inclusive inspection reports and deliver those reports from the field to the Department's headquarters in real time. Previously, inspectors logged inspection results on paper and filed them manually.

In addition, the ability to see satellite imagery through the App gives inspectors a bird's eye view of the entire inspection site. Inspectors will now be able to more quickly identify and track trends and respond to potential threats to the industry, such as harmful pests, plant diseases and invasive species. Photos can also easily be attached to any inspection. Signatures are captured digitally and the App eliminates additional paper by incorporating field guides and reference material electronically.

Sharlene Reeves, President of the Board of Directors for the New York State Nursery & Landscape Association said, "The horticultural industry is pleased to learn of the new Mobile Inspection App. The ability to report and monitor inspection results quickly will have a beneficial impact on our industry. A tool that allows inspectors to deliver information in real time, attach pictures and refer back to existing data will reduce time spent and allow inspectors to monitor the results of multiple inspections. This will result in growers and end users alike being assured that all precautions are being taken to deliver healthy products."

### **About the Department of Agriculture and Markets**

The Division of Plant Industry is one of nine divisions of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. It is responsible for maintaining plant health by detecting and preventing the spread of diseases and harmful invasive species, promoting integrated pest management, regulating the sale of seed and fertilizers, and ensuring the health of honey bees. The Division also oversees the [New York State Seed Testing Laboratory](#) in Albany, which provides assurances to the agricultural community that seed used in production is healthy and robust.

The Department's mission is to foster a competitive food and agricultural industry that benefits producers and consumers alike. Through its various divisions, the Department works to promote the agricultural industry and its world-class products, foster agricultural environmental stewardship and safeguard the State's food supply.

The Department operates the [Great New York State Fair](#) and administers the [Taste NY](#) initiative, the [FreshConnect](#) and the new [New York State Grown & Certified programs](#).

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