



NCTA Position Statement on New Christmas Tree Checkoff Program

The National Christmas Tree Association is pleased that the USDA has announced a final rule on the creation of a Christmas Tree Promotion, Research and Information Order, commonly known as a "Checkoff."

This program was **requested by the industry in 2009** and has gone through two industry-wide comment periods during which 565 comments were submitted from interested parties. More than 70% of the growers posting comments, and nearly 90% of the state and multi-state associations that posted comments indicated that they were in favor of the program. A group of Christmas Tree farmers and retailers spent nearly three years studying the potential positives and negatives of a checkoff promotion and research program, including looking at other commodities that have similar programs.

The program is designed to benefit the industry and **will be funded by the growers** at a rate of 15 cents per tree sold. The program will be administered by an independent 12-member **board of small business owners who grow and sell farm-grown Christmas trees** and they will be responsible for developing and approving promotional and research efforts to benefit the entire industry. The **program is not expected to have any impact on the final price consumers pay for their Christmas tree**. The funds collected after this season will be used to develop promotion and research programs for the 2012 season.

This program was developed under the Commodity Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996. There are at least **18 other similar programs already in effect for various agricultural commodities**. Although smaller in scope, the Christmas tree program will be similar to recognizable programs for milk, cotton and beef that have brought consumers commodity-oriented messages such as "Got Milk?" and "Beef, It's what's for dinner."

About the National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA)

NCTA is the professional organization representing nearly 5,000 farms and retailers engaged in growing and selling Real Christmas Trees to nearly 30 million consumers. Based in Chesterfield, Mo., NCTA's mission is to promote the use of Real Christmas Trees and support the industry that provides them. For more information:

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