

Media Relations

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UNH Greenhouses Earn Top Sustainability Credential from International Group

DURHAM, N.H. – For the second year, the Macfarlane Research Greenhouses at the University of New Hampshire have received the top grade for sustainability by an independent international sustainability certification group. The facility, which is part of the [NH Agricultural Experiment Station](#), is the only research greenhouse operation in the world with this sustainability certification.

The [MPS Group](#) of the Netherlands facilitates a greenhouse sustainability certification program that assesses energy, water, and fertilizer use; crop protection methods; and waste management in greenhouses around the globe. MPS Group operates in more than 55 countries and works with about 4,000 growers.

The Macfarlane Research Greenhouses maintained a grade A certification for the second year since UNH began participating in the program in October 2012. With about 20,000 square feet of greenhouse space, the facility has about 20 research projects ongoing at any given time and is a key component of the experiment station's extensive research program.

In its review of the Macfarlane Research Greenhouses, MPS commended the UNH facility for its new fertilizer inventory system, crop protection, and waste management. "It is good to see that the MPS ABC certification is working as an instrument for UNH Greenhouses. In comparison with the initial audit, I have seen several improvements in record keeping and also in relation to thoughts on how to further improve the total score for MPS ABC. The involved staff led by David Goudreault are professionals and dedicated to the task," said MPS-ECAS auditor Arthij van der Veer.

During the first year of participating in the certification program, Goudreault said greenhouse staff developed efficient methods for logging and reporting inputs associated with fertilizer usage, crop protection, water usage, energy, and waste management. In the second year, management evaluated changes in reported inputs over time and began to set benchmarks for improvement.

"Participating in MPS has increased our awareness of the inputs associated with each research project. For example, Brent Loy's cucurbit breeding program requires high water and fertility inputs. We recently installed moisture sensors and a water flow meter for a hybrid melon growing program. Sensor readings are integrated with our irrigation controller to intermittently pulse water at short intervals to maintain a specific moisture level and reduce leaching from the pot to a bare minimum," Goudreault said.

"We have already found that we can maintain excellent plant quality with a significantly reduced fertility rate. Although water use evaluations are not complete, it seems clear that it will decrease significantly. We're planning to install a similar watering system in the larger cucurbit breeding crop in the spring," he said.

Founded in 1887, the [NH Agricultural Experiment Station](#) at the [UNH College of Life Sciences and Agriculture](#) is UNH's original research center and an elemental component of New Hampshire's land-grant university heritage and mission. We steward federal and state funding to provide unbiased and objective research concerning diverse aspects of sustainable agriculture and foods, aquaculture, forest management, and related wildlife, natural resources and rural community topics. We maintain the [Woodman](#) and [Kingman](#) agronomy and horticultural farms, the [Macfarlane Greenhouses](#), the [Fairchild Dairy Teaching and Research Center](#), and the

[Organic Dairy Research Farm](#). Additional properties also provide forage, forests and woodlands in direct support to research, teaching, and outreach.

The [University of New Hampshire](#), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,300 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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