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Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Health Update

August 18, 2010 (Harrisburg, PA) – Penn State University Associate Professor of Horticulture, Ricky M. Bates, travelled Pennsylvania this season analyzing the condition of Christmas trees. He concluded that it is difficult, if not impossible, to make generalizations across the state about the status of the crop this year.

Some areas have been extremely dry, while other locations not that far away have seen sufficient rainfall in the form of thunder storms.

The effects of frost damage are similarly varied across the state. Some farms suffered two consecutive years while others saw no damage. Farm location and topography greatly affect frost damage.

Generally losses have been high for spring 2010-planted seedlings and transplants, regardless of species. Low precipitation made plant establishment difficult.

For established trees in the field, there has been some damage from the drought and heat. A number of farms have seen scorching of needles on some species such as Douglas-fir.

Most species, with the possible exception of Canaan fir, were damaged by frost this year. This damage was scattered around the state, so not all farms experienced loss. However, when combined with the frost from last year, this year's frost rendered some trees on some farms unsellable for this year.

This year has been challenging for Pennsylvania Christmas trees, and crop condition varies with location.

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The PA Christmas Tree Growers Association (PCTGA) represents over 250 growers of Pennsylvania Christmas trees. PCTGA works to promote and develop a community of interest among growers of Christmas trees in Pennsylvania and adjoining states, as well as to raise public awareness about Christmas trees. To find a Christmas tree grower near you, visit our Website at www.christmastrees.org.