

## **Colombia To Ship Millions of “Green” Roses to U.S. for Valentine’s Day** *Florverde®-Certified Farms Recognized for Global Environmental and Social Standards*

BOGOTA, Colombia, Feb. 3 – The old saying *Roses are Red, Violets are Blue*, may not totally ring true this Valentine’s Day. In fact, the estimated 300 million stems of flowers grown on Colombia’s Florverde-certified farms headed to the United States for the holiday of love will be *green* this year. Colombia is the largest supplier of cut flowers to the U.S. market, and the majority of these flowers are grown on the 163 participating Florverde® farms, which are in independently certified compliance with stringent U.S. and global environmental and social standards.

"For the past 13 years, we have been working diligently to improve and exceed upon the global environmental standards in floriculture," said Augusto Solano, President of the Association of Colombian Flower Exporters (Asocolflores). "We continue to progress and are proud to be leaders in sustainable practices in floriculture."

Established in 1996, labeled with Spanish name meaning “green flowers,” the Florverde®-certification program was created by Asocolflores with a vision to lead the flower industry and improve practices by establishing and regulating a set of social and environmental standards, as well as a code of conduct. Florverde® is verified by SGS, a renowned international auditing company based in Switzerland. SGS is a leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company widely recognized as the global benchmark for quality and integrity.

Further validating the achievements of Florverde®, GLOBALG.A.P. (The Global Partnership for Good Agricultural Practice) recognized the organization’s socio-environmental practices with the GLOBALG.A.P. international seal; Florverde and GLOBALG.A.P. standards are now equivalent and mutually accepted by all trading partners. The GLOBALG.A.P. seal and standard is one of the most important and recognizable certifications in the world promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

"The standards of these two certifications – Florverde® and GLOBALG.A.P. -- preserve and protect fertile soil and natural resources with the mission to achieve

sustainable agriculture,” stated Solano. “These certifications instill confidence among retailers, flower wholesalers and consumers in the United States and around the world.”

***Florverde-Certified Farm Environmental and Social Practices:***

- Implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs resulting in reduced pesticide use
- Monitoring soils to control nitrates and prevent water contamination
- Programs to reduce water loss in crops and soils
- Recycling of waste products
- Analysis of occupational health and work risks and development of worker friendly programs
- Implementation of voluntary social programs aimed at improving workers’ quality of life – education, health care, child services
- Development of programs to train and update floriculture skills for workers
- Facilitation of social, athletic and recreational programs for workers

The 700 million stems of Colombian flowers produced annually under Florverde standards mean healthier workers, fewer pesticides, stronger families, better training and personal opportunities, and a more sustainable future and environment.