



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Agriculture Secretary Highlights Partnerships Protecting Pennsylvania's Economy, Environment from Invasive Species Damage**

**Cochranville, PA** – Today, Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding and Bureau of Plant Industry Director Dr. Ruth Welliver visited Star Roses Nursery in Cochranville to highlight concerted efforts to protect Pennsylvania's economy and environment from damage threats posed by invasive species.

"Invasive species can hit the bottom lines of Pennsylvania businesses and homeowners hard, posing threats to our health and quality of life," said Redding. "By building partnerships that span across industries and agencies we are working together to safeguard the plants in our yards and the crops in our fields, now and for the future."

The department works to protect farm crops, nursery crops, and home landscapes, from invasive bacteria, viruses, insects, and plants. Through the bureau of plant industry, the work provides consumer protection for Pennsylvania shoppers to ensure quality products and services through certification, licensing, product registration, survey, and inspection programs.

"These programs are critical for our businesses," said Dr. Welliver. "They fulfill our obligations with trade partners, and help businesses find better ways to protect against invasive species. But our agency can't do that work alone, and our partners play a vital role in the success of invasive species management."

Governor Tom Wolf re-established the [Governor's Invasive Species Council](#) by executive order in 2017 with the goal of developing and implementing management plans for non-native invasive species through coordination with federal, regional, state, and local efforts. The council includes members from seven state agencies and 14 organizations, with the goal to minimize the impacts that invasive species cause in the environment, to the economy, and on human health.

Because invasive species impact so many businesses, organizations, and individuals, the economic damage is difficult to quantify. Last month, the council [conducted the first statewide survey](#) to measure costs of the damage inflicted by invasive species in Pennsylvania, and the costs tied to preventing and controlling them. The more than 1,000 responses to that survey will be used to inform a strategic, [regional partnership approach](#) to managing invasive species.

"The many partners we have through the Governor's Invasive Species Council continue to unite our agriculture and green industries under the banner of serving the common good," said

Redding. “But that work doesn’t just happen. It requires the time and effort of the people and industries across Pennsylvania. Industry partners like John Rausch and Star Roses and Plants are critical in this battle to keep Pennsylvania agriculture thriving.”

Rausch, who is chief operating officer of the business, joined Redding in calling out the importance of the partnerships to nurseries and landscaping businesses across the state.

For more information about the Department of Agriculture’s regulatory programs, including the Governor’s Invasive Species Council, visit [agriculture.pa.gov](http://agriculture.pa.gov).

**Note:** Photos and video will be available at [www.pacast.com](http://www.pacast.com).

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