

Media Release

November 13, 2008

Contact: Diane Dulmage
Communications Associate, SCS
ddulmage@scscertified.com
510-452-8003

VeriFlora® Certification Continues Growth in Ecuador Four Growers Respond to Market Demand for Sustainable Flowers

Emeryville, CA – Four prominent cut flower growers in Ecuador – Valleflor, Sande Ecuador, SunRite Farms and Flower Village – recently earned the right to use the VeriFlora® Certified Sustainably Grown label by meeting the rigorous requirements of the VeriFlora certification program. Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), a global leader in third-party certification and sustainable agriculture, administers the VeriFlora program, the sustainability benchmark for cut flowers and potted plants sold in the North American market.



Valleflor, a 55-acre farm in Puenbo, produces summer varieties such as Phlox, Limonium, Delphinium, Bouvardia and Veronica. James Andrade Mena, general manager, was motivated to seek VeriFlora certification as a way of demonstrating the farm's commitment to its people and the environment. "Moreover," said Mena, "we want to show the marketplace that we have a high quality product." VeriFlora certification includes a rigorous quality component and sets industry-leading criteria for cold chain management and plant health. Farms that earn certification send a strong quality message up the supply chain. www.valleflor.com.ec

Sande Ecuador breeds and produces Zantedeschia year-round, and is a subsidiary of the Sandegroup, with farms in Holland, Kenya and Ecuador. Victoria Alomía, certification coordinator, said, "we sought VeriFlora certification in response to its growing awareness among floral buyers in North America. Our customers expect quality and VeriFlora gave us a way to benchmark our quality practices." www.callaflowers.com

SunRite Farms earned certification on all 143 acres of greenhouse roses. The company improves the lives of its 800 employees by providing onsite medical care, computer skills, and classes for children. Committed to reducing its carbon footprint, SunRite installed a gravity-based irrigation system that does not require an electric pump. Moreover the farm invested heavily in a two-tier water purification system for both irrigation and drinking water.

"The VeriFlora certification process helped us make improvements in several different aspects of sustainability," said Jose Miguel Orska, commercial manager for SunRite. "It also helped us refine our quality control procedures." The VeriFlora standard requires both a quality control manual, as well as quantitative vase-life testing. www.sunrite.com

Flower Village boasts 38 acres of roses, Limonium, Statice and Eringium. The entire farm is surrounded by a fence of Cypress trees which creates a wind barrier and helps reduce soil erosion, thereby reducing the farm's environmental impact. Longtime practitioners of integrated pest management, Flower Village has an onsite laboratory where it identifies and cultivates new biological controls. "We are committed to not only practicing sustainability, but also contributing to the knowledge about sustainable floriculture practices," said Ricardo Delgado, general manager. www.flower-village-ec.com

Ecuador is among the most biodiverse countries in the world, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). "Cut flower farms in South America are leading the way in VeriFlora sustainability practices, and setting important examples for others to follow," said Roberto Boada, lead auditor for the Andean Sustainable Agriculture Certification Services Foundation (FAASCS). FAASCS, based in Quito, Ecuador, is the first independent South American organization authorized to conduct VeriFlora certification audits.

VeriFlora Certified Sustainably Grown cut flowers are available in all major North American markets.

###

About Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) – *Certification for a Sustainable World*TM

SCS has been providing global leadership in third-party environmental, sustainability, and food quality certification, auditing, testing and standards development for over 25 years. SCS's programs span a wide cross-section of the economy, recognizing accomplishments in the fields of green building, product manufacturing, forestry, retail, agricultural production, fisheries, energy, and food processing and handling. For more information about VeriFlora and SCS, visit www.veriflora.com or call 510-452-8000.

About Andean Sustainable Agriculture Certification Services Foundation (FAASCS)

FAASCS is first independent South American organization authorized to conduct VeriFlora certification audits. Fully trained by SCS, the not-for-profit organization is working to promote farming practices that support a healthy agroecology, protect wildlife, conserve natural resources, promote fair labor practices and community relations, and deliver outstanding quality to the marketplace. To contact FAASCS, phone +059322279276 or smunoz@faascs.org.