THE FLORIDA HORTICULTURE INDUSTRIES
CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

D. B. McConnell
*IFAS Ornamental Horticulture Department*
Gainesville

J. Siebenthaler
Seminole

P. L. Neel
*IFAS Agricultural Research Center*
Ft. Lauderdale

Abstract. The Florida Horticultural Industries Certification Board is a non-profit organization incorporated under Florida law in 1974. FHICB consists of representatives of the various industries dependent on use and sale of ornamental plants in Florida. The primary goal of FHICB is to improve the level of professional achievement in the horticultural field by providing the opportunity for certification in specialized horticultural skills. Courses to prepare an individual for the certification examination are available at various Florida community colleges and vocational-technical institutes throughout the year. Presently, certification is offered in nurserymen's retail sales, landscape installation, and landscape maintenance. Other certification programs in allied horticultural fields are in the planning stages and will be available soon.

Concern for the environment has caused people to become more aware of the importance of plants in creating and maintaining favorable areas in man's environment. Greater environmental awareness has increased the sales and uses of landscape plants. New garden centers have been built to meet this demand; new landscape and maintenance companies have been formed, and sales and services have multiplied for established firms.

Increased sales of plants and related supplies have been beneficial to the associated industries, but not without some problems. Rapid growth has resulted in employment of people with little or no training in horticulture at relatively low wages. This has frequently resulted in the promotion of ambitious and hard working employees to supervisory positions. These employees lack the education and experience necessary to satisfy all the customer's questions relative to care, installation, and maintenance of plant materials.

Representatives of the Florida Nurseryman and Grower's Association, Florida Associated Nurserymen, University of Florida Department of Ornamental Horticulture and Department of Agricultural Education, and Division of Plant Industry (Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services) met in Gainesville in January 1974 to solve these and other problems. This meeting resulted in the formation of a steering committee to determine and establish guidelines for an industry-oriented and dominated certification board to develop a voluntary certification program for Florida horticultural industries. Criteria selected to serve as program development guidelines include: establishment of professional levels of accomplishment in the horticulture industries; upgrading employment opportunities for those engaged in the horticulture industries; and protection of the buying public and development of consumer confidence.

To accomplish these goals, a $5,000.00 grant was given by FNGA to SHARE (Special Help in Agricultural Research and Education), and through SHARE to the Department of Ornamental Horticulture to develop textbooks and tests suitable for the certification program. This was followed by a $1,000.00 grant from FAN. (Since development of the certification programs, an additional $1,500.00 has been pledged by Florida Seedsmen and Garden Supplies Association).

Three areas identified by industry as having greatest need and potential benefit to the general public were retail sales, landscape installation and landscape maintenance. Subsequent steering committee meetings established guidelines for the programs to be administered by the Florida Horticultural Industries Certification Board upon incorporation. The functions of FHICB would be to oversee preparation of instructional handbooks and tests, update handbooks and tests, administer tests, issue certificates and other materials pertinent to certification, recertify certificate holders, and keep records current on persons certified in the program.

The steering committee decided that handbooks should be written to make home study feasible,
although formal instructional programs would aid trainees in mastering the handbook material. Consequently, pilot instructional programs, using *Florida Nurseryman’s Retail Sales Handbook*, were implemented at Pinellas Vocational-Technical Institute and Broward Community College. These were successful and courses have been implemented at other institutions.

Certification examinations, costing $30.00, are administered twice a year—the first two weeks in January and the first two weeks in July. Specific dates, times, and locations in the state are announced to applicants by mail. Certification is valid for four years and is renewable every four years by means of re-examination at a cost of $10.00. An applicant must be sponsored by an industry employer or enrolled in or a graduate of a recognizable horticultural program leading to full-time activity in the horticulture field.

Programs developed by the Florida Horticultural Industries Certification Board have progressed from initial pilot stages to full realization, and there are now 44 certified nurserymen and 9 certified landscape installers in Florida.

Three textbooks are available for college and/or home study purposes: *Florida Nurseryman’s Retail Sales Handbook* (222 pages), *Florida Landscape Installation Handbook* (125 pages), and *Florida Landscape Maintenance Handbook* (187 pages).

FHICB courses are being taught in 9 counties at community colleges and vocational-technical institutes. Other institutions have expressed interest in the program and nearly 500 textbooks have been sold, with the demand from industry and educational institutions increasing.

FHICB was officially incorporated under Florida law as a non-profit organization in December 1974. Since then several new board representatives from Florida Irrigation Society, Professional Grounds Maintenance Association, and Florida Turfgrass Association have met with FHICB to discuss the establishment of certification programs in their respective fields. Membership on the board has been limited to governmental agencies and horticultural industry associations. Such membership limitations ensure that FHICB remains an industry-oriented and industry dominated entity.

**THE PRESENT STATUS OF CHLORDANE AND HEPTACHLOR**

**Richard L. Lipsey**

*Velsicol Chemical Corporation*  
*Lithia*

*Abstract.* Chlordane and Heptachlor have been used safely and effectively for the last 25 years in Florida and around the world. Recent studies show that they are not bioaccumulated in the environment, exist in insignificant levels in nature, and do not represent a carcinogenic hazard to man.

The Environmental Protection Agency has mislead the public with half-truths and cancer scare tactics, and is presently trying to suspend the manufacture and sale of Chlordane and Heptachlor.

There are no alternative insecticides for many of the uses of Chlordane and Heptachlor in Florida. Where there are alternatives, they are often less effective, more costly, more toxic to humans, unavailable in sufficient quantities, or disruptive to established pest management programs.

Chlordane and Heptachlor are chlorinated hydrocarbon insecticides with relatively short residual activity which are inexpensive and have been used safely and effectively for the last 25 years in Florida and around the world. They are widely used in and around the home and in up to 60 agricultural crops and represent one-twentieth of the insecticides used in the United States. Each has been subjected to intensive and continual scrutiny since the mid-1940s. We know more about the benefits and risks of Chlordane and Heptachlor than almost any insecticide used in this country.

In Florida, 1,124,193 pounds of technical Chlordane was used in 1973 and 260,367 pounds of Heptachlor. In the USA last year a total of 21 million pounds of Chlordane and Heptachlor was used.

*Regulatory action.* Under pressure from the Environmental Defense Fund, an environmentalist lobby group with an annual budget of $27 million a year, the Environmental Protection Agency cancelled the use of Aldrin and Dieldrin last fall.