

**TREES FOR TROOPS**

- Around 800 Christmas Tree farms from 29 states are donating about 14,000 Christmas trees to troops and families overseas and at U.S. military bases.
- We hope other American families will buy and donate an additional 3,000 trees this year so we can provide at least 17,000 total military families a fresh, farm-grown Christmas tree
- FedEx is donating the logistics and transport of the trees
- Since the program started in 2005, we have touched the lives of more than 67,000 total families who volunteer to serve part of their lives in our military
- Our military and their families have been providing a real service to our country, and, as Christmas Tree farmers, we want them to be able to experience a traditional Christmas with a Real Tree
- Trees for Troops Weekend offers consumers an opportunity to buy and donate a tree added to those donated by tree farms. There are over 40 locations around the U.S. where consumers can do this.
- The Christmas SPIRIT Foundation is a not-for-profit foundation that advances the Christmas spirit for children, families and the environment. Trees for Troops is just one of our projects. For more details, go to [www.ChristmasSpiritFoundation ... dot ... org](http://www.ChristmasSpiritFoundation...dot...org).

**INDUSTRY**

- Around **30 million** farm-grown Christmas Trees are enjoyed each year in the U.S.
- Real Trees are a **\$1.2 billion farm commodity** .
- The Real Tree industry **involves an estimated 100,000 people** ranging from Scouts on a corner lot to farms planting and harvesting thousands of trees each year.

**SALES**

- In 2009, the number of Real Christmas Trees purchased in the U.S. was 28.2 million.
- Average amount spent on a farm-grown tree was \$40.92, which was a 12% increase from the previous year.
- Industry experts point out that many factors can influence sales, including harvest conditions, weather conditions, number of consumers traveling for the holidays and even the number of days between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

## PRICES

- Final retail prices vary greatly and can be influenced by many factors, both general and localized, including size of tree, species, USDA grade, distance shipped, market demand, type of retailer, even day of the week, etc.
- There is simply no way to accurately forecast price tags on trees.
- As a general rule of thumb, if consumers are buying a tree based on price, they should shop around, because they can find a wide range of prices.

## ENVIRONMENTAL MESSAGE

- Using a farm-grown natural tree over a manufactured tree is the eco-friendly choice.
- Real Christmas Trees are a **renewable, recyclable resource**.
- Real Christmas Trees are harvested in the fall, and new seedlings are planted in the spring to replace those harvested.
- Trees on farms would NOT be planted if families were not buying Real Christmas Trees
- Environmental groups consistently recommend using a Real Tree over a fake one.
- Several environmental health organizations warn consumers about potential lead dust and PVC of artificial trees.

## RECYCLING MESSAGE

- After Christmas, Real Trees are recycled, frequently becoming mulch for gardens and trails, habitat for fish or barriers to reduce soil erosion.
- An estimated 93% of all Real Trees are recycled either in community programs or in someone's garden or yard.
- Finding local tree recycling information can be done typically with basic Internet searches or through local newspapers and other local news media.

## TRADITIONAL MESSAGE

- Christmas is about traditions and memories and the Christmas Tree is the centerpiece of the celebration.
- Real Christmas Trees foster family traditions and create memories that last a lifetime.
- **(note your own tradition...personalize)**
- Mention unique and warm traditions that some of your customers have, like a family that now has it's 4<sup>th</sup> generation coming to your farm for their tree every year

## **ALLERGIES**

- Allergic reactions are usually not caused by the tree itself, but could be triggered by things on the tree, like dust and pollens that have been blown onto the tree while in the field.
- Having the tree put into a mechanical shaking machine before bringing it home removes many possible allergens off the tree.
- Whether you use a fresh Christmas Tree from a farm, or an artificial tree stored in a box, if you have sensitive allergies to dust, molds, etc. you might simply spray the tree down in the yard with a hose before putting it up indoors.

## **HOLIDAY SAFETY**

- Less than 0.0004% of Real Christmas Trees used each year are ignited in home fires
- NEVER has a Real Christmas Tree caused or started a fire.
- Even though the chance of a Christmas Tree fire is very slim, you can ensure that your Real Christmas Tree stays fresh and safe by following the NCTA recommended care tips.
- Anyone who has ever tried to start a camp fire with green wood understands how flame resistant a properly watered tree is.