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## Ecke Ranch and Armstrong Growers Expand Relationship

[May 25, 2007 Encinitas, California, and Glendora California]

The Ecke Ranch and Armstrong Growers have reached an agreement that enables both companies to focus efforts on their core competencies and better serve their customers.

Under the new agreement, Armstrong Growers will become the grower and seller of finished poinsettias for Ecke's florist and wholesale flowering plant customers. Armstrong Growers will service these florist and wholesale customers through a catalog as Ecke has done in the past. "Over the years, with the guidance of Ecke's experts, we've perfected our ability to grow the Ecke-style poinsettia, and we're pleased to carry on the Ecke quality and tradition," said James Russell, Armstrong Growers' Vice President.

Ecke will continue as usual to provide poinsettia cuttings to growers worldwide, and will carry on its world-famous breeding work with poinsettias. Ecke is the breeder of the new and very popular 'Visions of Grandeur™', an exciting color breakthrough for the popular holiday plant, as well as 'Prestige™ Early Red', the most significant new red poinsettia introduction ever in North America.

With the finished poinsettia production leaving the Encinitas, California facility, Ecke will now be able to expand its operations as a plant innovator and provider of cuttings of new plants to wholesale growers. Their recent acquisition of Oglevee®, a breeder of geraniums and other plants, reflects the strategy the company is following in this direction. The landmark Ecke Ranch will be the research and development headquarters for both the poinsettia and the Oglevee® genetic lines.

“We were looking for a way to enlarge and enhance our grower relationships,” said Paul Ecke, CEO. “This allows us to focus on research with our exciting new genetics, expand our service to our core cutting customers, while at the same time remaining close to the end consumer through our relationship with Armstrong Growers and Armstrong Garden Centers’ 36 retail stores in California.”

“Innovative breeding and developing closer relations with customers are key value drivers of the Ecke offering. We look forward to new products and market opportunities as we work together,” said Andy Higgins, President of Ecke Ranch.

Mike Kunce, Armstrong CEO agrees, “With this enhanced relationship, we’ll both be serving our mutual customers in a better way. This partnership allows each company to focus on what it does best.”

The Ecke Ranch and Armstrong Garden Centers have had an ongoing relationship for many years, which includes the Ecke/Armstrong partnership at The Flower Fields™ in Carlsbad, California, and the introduction by Armstrong of new Ecke poinsettia varieties. The two companies have worked closely to provide the very best quality poinsettias to Armstrong retail stores in California, other top independent garden centers and resorts in California, Nevada and Arizona.

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