



# Amherst Greenhouse in the spotlight



Photos by Monty Siekerman

# Amherst Greenhouse in the national spotlight

**Cover photos from left: Mary and Adin Horst, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and wife Mary, SBA Administrator Linda McMahon at Amherst Greenhouse near Alger.**

**Story and photos by Monty Siekerman**  
“Humbling” and “amazing” are the two words that Adin Horst used to describe the visit of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration who to paid a visit Wednesday morning to his greenhouse located southwest of Alger. “You can’t really put into words the fact they came here,” he said.

Secretary Sonny Perdue, a member of the President’s Cabinet and Cabinet-level Administrator Linda McMahon of the SBA were impressed with the modern greenhouse that has grown from 200 sq. ft. to 174,000 sq. ft. (4 acres) in just 16 years.

Amherst Greenhouse is co-owned by Adin and his wife Mary. It’s a family business with the Horst’s three children and spouses helping, as well. And, they hire about 20 more part-time people during the season.

The greenhouse operation is popular with area residents. Millions of plants will be sold in just 7 weeks in the Spring as shoppers flood the store to beautify their properties with Amherst bedding plants, hanging baskets, and planters.

The operation is technologically efficient. For example, a machine fills 12 seedlings at a time into flats. An automatic watering/fertilizer system saves labor. And, the

quality of the plants is second to none. Secretary Perdue was impressed with the family-owned aspect, it’s modernization, and plant quality.

Administrator McMahon was glad to see the success of a business that the SBA had a part in. The SBA helped with the business plan and getting the company registered with the State of Ohio.

And, as the group walked among the aisles of plants, the Horsts and federal officials talked about a number of things, including the fact that taxes eat up a lot of the wages of the employees.

Secretary Perdue knows something about farming. He grew up on a farm in Georgia, has a veterinarian degree, is a former Georgia governor, sportsman, and pilot.

Administrator McMahon has a big job. She is the advocate for 30 million small businesses in America.

For the federal officials, Amherst Greenhouse was one of several stops along the way on Wednesday. Before the day ended, they were to visit Lima, Celina, and Columbus.

This year, Amherst Greenhouse will open on Friday, April 20. Hours will be 9 a.m. until 8 p.m. Monday-Friday, from 9-5 Saturday, and closed Sunday.





**Upon arrival, Secretary Perdue greets Mary and Adin Horst.**





**Touring the greenhouse.**





**A machine that transplants seedling into flats, formerly a time-consuming job.**





**A labor-saving watering/fertilizer system.**





**A family affair—The Adin and Mary Horst with their children, spouses, and grandchildren.**