Is the Internet Going to Hurt You?
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While many growers have felt the pressure from imports on their profitability, this force is relatively small compared to what growers will face on the Internet. But rather than being spread out over several years, the impact will be over a shorter period of 12 to 18 months. The astonishing rate at which commerce has come to the Internet is perilous to those who are slow to respond. Growers who are not using the Internet to move product, will be left behind. And the penalty could well be bankruptcy.

Basically, whatever product you are producing, someone will be moving it via the Internet. If you don’t then you will suffer from the competition. Let’s look at an example: let’s say that the buyer purchasing product from you has the choice of talking to you or checking on the website of a competitor as to availability of the product. Calling you takes several minutes; the Internet competitor can be checked out in a few seconds. If the buyer is short on time (and who isn’t these days), you can guess which will be checked first. If the buyer has the option to buy and arrange delivery directly off the website. Then that saves yet more time.

Another example; if you are selling through a flower market stand; you have to ask yourself how many times will florists chose to come down to your stand in the middle of the night when they can order from your competitor off a website that lists quality standards and promises satisfaction guaranteed. You might not lose all the sales, but it could be enough to put you out of business.

It is clear that this type of competition is possible and emerging in every market. In some metropolitan areas you can already order groceries for same-day delivery. Doing it with floricultural products is obviously next. It can be done in the retail sector, then it can certainly be done with wholesale.

Why let someone else do this when it could be you? You may need to partner with someone who has the needed skills in Internet commerce (so that you can continue to focus on what you do best), but you should not ignore this force; otherwise the competition could put you out of business.