

4/30/2025

Effectively Efficient

Jennifer Polanz

It became relatively clear early on in writing for *Inside Grower* that efficiency was going to be one of the key drivers to moving this industry forward. It was a constant drumbeat at every event I went to and every conversation I had, and continues today.

BUT, what has also become clear is that efficiency has to have clear targets, be a commonsense approach, and overall, be cost-effective. As we've talked about in these pages before, technology for the sake of technology gets you a one-way ticket to auctioning off said technology for cents on the dollar.

Labor, of course, is one of the more challenging areas where technology can help improve efficiency. Whether that's technology doing something faster than an actual human, or helping a human to do their job faster and better, it's worth exploring. Controlling the climate of a greenhouse or indoor farm is another area worth exploring. And even dialing in on nutrients to grow better plants faster—that's also worth taking a deep dive. These are all topics you'll find within these pages.

For example, in this issue, I detailed my visit to McAdoo, Pennsylvania, home of the second campus for Little Leaf Farms (the first being in Devens, Massachusetts, which you'll remember from our 2019 cover story). Why is Little Leaf a two-time cover operation for *Inside Grower*? The company was selected by our judging panel as our first Operational Excellence Award Winner for the CEAs—Cultivating Excellence Awards, at this year's Indoor Ag-Con. We partnered with the folks at Indoor Ag-Con to host the awards and Little Leaf was a well-deserved winner, in part because of their use of technology to become more efficient and produce a consistent product. [Read the full story here.](#)

I actually had another story planned and then scrapped it after I read my colleague Jen Zurko's story for April *GrowerTalks*—a [Q&A with Dr. Greenhouse, Nadia Sabeh](#), on California's Title 24 mandatory energy requirements for new greenhouses. If you're a U.S. greenhouse grower, it's vital for you to know what's happening in California because it often sets the standard that others eventually follow.

With all this talk about efficiencies, it's important to know that you don't always have to go it alone when it comes to the cost. There are lots of resources out there to help pay for improvements that can make you more efficient. We asked [David Kuack to look into those](#) (although I have to add a caveat that government policy has changed and continues to change, so please investigate grant funding thoroughly).

Not everything in this issue is about efficiencies. There's also a troubling mystery that would perplex Sherlock Holmes himself. [A novel greenhouse pepper wilt](#) has concerned researchers trying to figure out its exact cause to better advise on treating for it. For now, you can read what researchers have deduced so far and

what you can do in the meantime.

There's a lot more in the issue, so dig in. And if you feel so inclined, email me at jpolanz@ballpublishing.com to tell me what your growing operation is doing to be more efficient. I'd love to hear it!