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Using Resources Wisely

Jennifer Polanz



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It's been a minute, but back in the day I was a Girl Scout Troop Leader. From the very beginning, with our little first-grade Daisies, we learned the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The Promise is short and easy to memorize, but the Law is longer. Much of the Law has escaped my memory, except for a few key lines that stuck with me even after we hung up the vests. One of those is: Use Resources Wisely.

Of course, that goes along with Make the World a Better Place, which is probably the most important one overall. But our resources are vital, and many are finite, which means we need to protect and preserve them—an ideal I suspect helped get a lot of you on this path you find yourself today.

It's also a common thread through a lot of the stories in this issue. I drove down to Florence, Kentucky, to see a newer, larger iteration of 80 Acres Farms' vertical farm, where they're monitoring resource usage with closed-loop water recirculation, energy efficiencies (an ongoing goal) and sustainable indoor growing methods, while looking toward partnerships and optimal breeding to continue to improve. For those efforts, they were our winner for the 2025 Good Stewardship Award as part of the CEAs—Cultivating Excellence Awards—that we gave away with Indoor Ag-Con at their show in March. Turn to page 16 to read the full story. If you'd like a shot at this award or another, visit indoor.ag to fill out a nomination form!

One way to use fewer resources by way of pest controls is to scout early and often for troublesome outbreaks. Freelance contributor Dave Kuack has those best practices.

Water is one of our most precious resources and many of the facilities we write about have recirculating systems (or are considering them) for greater efficiency. However, these recirculating systems don't come without issues—mainly the potential for waterborne plant pathogens like Pythium, Phytophthora and Fusarium. In this issue, Florida Ph.D. student Dharti Thakulla and Professor Paul Fisher examine water sanitation system designs for recirculating hydroponics. Then, Peter Konjoian writes about newer research for keeping those systems clean (if you were at last year's CEA Summit in Danville, Virginia, it'll sound very familiar to you).

One other resource that's unlimited is the sun, but that's not always welcome full blast in a greenhouse. Bossman Beytes took a deep dive this issue into diffused lighting, and what the options are for growers now and potentially into the future.

Sometimes when we look at allocating resources, we try something, and if it doesn't quite hit the mark, we consider changing it. Dr. Matthew (Rex) Recsetar wrote our Research Corner article this issue about his research on decoupling aquaponics systems. Did I pique your interest?

And a last note, in Gene Giacomelli's Covering Environments column, he talks about the resource we may not always consider when thinking about sustainability: our people. He continues his series of columns about the ways the industry comes together via universities, private companies and private-public partnerships to educate the masses on controlled environment production.

I'd like to think my days as a Girl Scout leader helped inform how I move forward in my life, from leaving a place better than I found it to being prepared and doing a good turn daily. And, of course, using my resources wisely.