

Greenhouse 101 Survey; VertiFarm & AVF Summit; Cucumber Shortage



*Greenhouse vegetable news from GrowerTalks magazine*



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# inside GROWER

Controlled Environment Agriculture

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Greenhouse 101 Survey  
VertiFarm & AVF Summit  
USDA \$121M Investment  
TikTok Run on Cucumbers

IT'S IN THE  
BAG



## Your Help is Needed!


For any regular reader of this fine publication, it's probably apparent that I have a soft place in my heart for all educational courses. In particular, the [Greenhouse Training Online courses](#) offered by UF/IFAS through a grant from the American Floral Endowment and a donation from Ken and Deena Altman. As part of a continued effort to expand the program and benefiting graduate student research programs, the organizers are asking readers to participate in a survey to help identify training priorities for growers and other members of the CEA industry.

The [survey](#) takes an average of 15 minutes and is being offered in English and Spanish. Any participants will also receive 25% off any remaining 2024 courses, with "Success with your Latino Workforce" and "Weed Management" both starting on October 14. I highly encourage all readers to voice their opinions, as efforts like these are crucial for helping train the next generation of dedicated and passionate CEA workers!

Contact [greenhousetraining@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:greenhousetraining@ifas.ufl.edu) with any questions.

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## VertiFarm & AVF Summit

If you're passing through Dortmund, Germany, during early October, I highly recommend you stop in and check out the joint 3rd VertiFarm business and networking forum being hosted with the 8th [Association for Vertical Farming \(AVF\)](#) Summit.



Advertised as the space for "innovations, trends and ongoing developments in the fields of controlled environment agriculture (CEA), next-level farming and new food systems," attendees can expect to hear talks on four primary tracks, including:

1. Science & Industry
2. Business development and investment
3. New food systems
4. Cannabis and medicinal plants

In particular, I would be excited to hear the keynote address entitled "Wake-up call for VF" from Dr. Leo Marcelis of Wageningen University. The organizers also recently announced the inclusion of the [AVF Start-Up Challenge](#), where a group of 10 young businesses will be given the opportunity to pitch their ideas in front of an influential audience. Two winning pitches will also be awarded a prize package containing membership to the AVF, personalized coaching, a stand at VertiFarm 2025 and more. VertiFarm is free for attendees and more information can be found on the show's [page](#).



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## **\$121M Investment in Specialty Crops Research & Organic Agriculture**



The USDA recently announced an investment of nearly \$121 million in grants and other funding to help support research and extension activities in specialty crop and organic agriculture producers as part of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) [Specialty Crop Research Initiative \(SCRI\)](#) and [Organic Agriculture Program](#).

Within the approximately 40 projects being funded under this recent initiative ranging from "market development to consumer education to research," one that caught my eye is a planning project titled "Enhancing Economic, Nutritional and Resiliency Outcomes for Strawberry Production in the U.S. South Central Region via Smart Controlled Environment Agriculture" by Dr. Nathan Howell of West Texas A&M University.

Seeking to meet the demand for CEA-based strawberry production in the U.S. South Central Region, the project authors are planning to conduct three industry-based meetings to engage growers, buyers and transporters on their needs for an emerging industry. These learnings will be compiled during a single-day strategy meeting before being used to complete a larger multi-year SCRI proposal to directly address issues being identified.

This is a great opportunity to get some community consensus on the future of the CEA strawberry industry in new parts of the country and I can't wait to see what comes! For more on the projects being funded, visit [usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov).



## TikTok Recipe Causes Run on Cucumbers

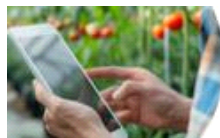
While I'm personally not on TikTok, I like to think that I'm still hip and connected enough to know what's going on with the youth. Having said that, I don't think any of us could have predicted the craze currently being held around cucumbers all because of one viral recipe.

For a bit of context for those of you who might be confused, [Buzzfeed](#) recently reported on the popularity of a cucumber salad recipe (pictured) featured in a popular video that's now been viewed close to 30 million times as of the article's publication.



Being touted for its easy preparation and hydrating nutritional value, I'm all for the internet's infatuation with this trend, but in my opinion, it's not the real story here. The real story is the one being featured by [Forbes](#) in their article "How Did a Viral TikTok Video Create a Cucumber Shortage in Iceland?" discussing the impact these trends can have on global supply chains and the impact of concepts like demand forecasting and predictive analytics.

While there's more to this story than can be unfolded in the space provided here, I think it's a good opportunity for us all to stop, make a salad out of our favorite fruit or vegetable, and think about the ways that the global food supply chain is affected by a cucumber salad recipe. (Which, for anyone curious, the original recipe can be found in the [Buzzfeed](#) article linked above.)



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Stay curious, ask questions and let me know how it goes at [scampbell@ballpublishing.com](mailto:scampbell@ballpublishing.com).



Dr. Sean Campbell

Editor-at-Large

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