

Acquisitions, Insect Frass and a Live Stream



Greenhouse vegetable news from GrowerTalks magazine

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inside GROWER

Controlled Environment Agriculture

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- CEA's
- Live Stream on Herbicides
- Freight Farms Acquisition
- Biobest Acquires Ecoation
- NE Greenhouse Conference
- BSFL Frass

The CEA's Are Coming Soon!

By Jen P.

We are thrilled to announce we soon will be launching the second year of the CEAs—Cultivating Excellence Awards, in partnership with [Indoor Ag-Con](#). These awards recognize commercial growers who stand out and excel in the industry, and innovative products that can be game changers.

Do you want to receive industry-wide recognition and potentially appear on the cover of a 2026 *Inside Grower* magazine, as well as receive a free All-Access Pass to Indoor Ag-Con 2026? We featured the 2025 Operational Excellence Award Winner, Little Leaf Farms, on our [Summer Issue cover](#), while 80 Acres Farms, our Good Stewardship Award winner, appears on the [Autumn Issue](#), which just went live.

We choose three finalists for each of our awards: Operational Excellence, Good Stewardship and Product Innovation. Of those finalists, our panel of expert judges choose a winner, which we announce during the CEAs Gala Awards Luncheon at Indoor Ag-Con. This year the show runs February 11-12, 2026 at the Westgate in Las Vegas. A special thank you goes out to our award sponsor, [BP Grower](#), for all their support.



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You can read about the full awards program and see last year's finalists and winners [HERE](#), and stay tuned for our launch date coming soon. We'd love to recognize YOU at the show in February!



Live Stream: Spend a Little, Save a Lot

On Wednesday, August 27, *GrowerTalks* will be hosting a live stream on proper application timing of pre-emergence herbicides. Keeping weeds from popping up in the first place can be the most effective tool to reduce pressure and the need to hand pull nuisance plants. Envu sponsored a third-party assessment of the costs and savings of a comprehensive weed control program.

This event includes two expert guests, Janna Beckerman, Ph.D. and Steve Larson. Janna is an ornamentals technical specialist at Envu and part of their Green Services Team and Steve is the Greenhouse and Nursery Specialist. Both bring decades of experience to share from both academic and commercial backgrounds.



Just like weeding, neglecting this opportunity can be costly! The live stream is free and you can register using this link [here](#). We hope to see you at 1 p.m. Eastern, Noon Central on August 27!



Freight Farms Acquisition

Earlier this year, Freight Farms declared bankruptcy and ceased operations, leaving many growers using their shipping container operation in limbo regarding supplies, support and repairs. This uneasy period has come to an end, as Growcer announced it has won the bid for all of Freight Farms' assets, including software, subscriptions, IP, parts for repair and anything pertaining to the flagship "Greenery" container system.



Inside a Growcer farm. (photocredit: Growcer)

Growcer builds shipping container farms much like Freight Farms, but with shelving that holds Deep Water Culture systems as opposed to the vertical Zip Towers. Based out of Canada, Growcer is celebrating a decade of operations in the horticultural space this year.

Corey Ellis, CEO of Growcer has made it clear they hope to sustain the over 500 installations, even hosting a Town Hall on August 1. He acknowledged the growing pains that much of the indoor ag community has experienced lately, while offering an optimistic perspective about the future.

Learn more about Growcer [here](#).

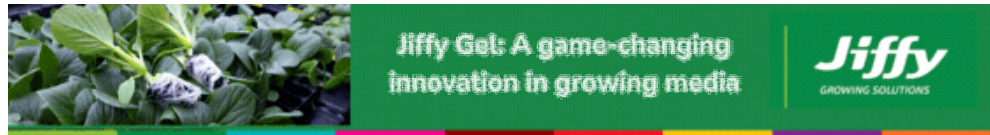


Biobest Acquires Ecoation

In another step forward for AI integration in agriculture, Biobest, a company long recognized for their work in beneficial insect rearing, has acquired Ecoation, a tech company specializing in crop imaging and data analytics.

Ecoation's platform is centered around two core services: integrated pest management (IPM) and crop prediction. Using in-greenhouse imaging technology, Ecoation's AI models analyze plants to estimate future fruit yields and detect pest outbreaks in tomatoes and peppers. By continuously scanning plants throughout the growing area, the system can identify subtle changes that are easy for human scouts to miss, offering growers earlier insights and more targeted responses.

With this acquisition, Biobest aims to bring a more unified and automated approach to crop monitoring and production. Since IPM encompasses a broad range of management strategies including pest control, disease prevention, plant health monitoring and yield optimization, it's only natural that AI-driven imaging would become part of the toolkit. By combining biological controls with data-powered forecasting, Biobest is positioning itself as a full-spectrum provider for greenhouse growers looking to scale sustainably and intelligently.



Northeast Greenhouse Conference to Spotlight Emerging CEA Berry Crops

This November, the Northeast Greenhouse Conference returns to Manchester, New Hampshire, for a two-day event running November 12–13. Among the highlights are two expert-led sessions on some of the hottest emerging crops in controlled environment agriculture: blackberries, raspberries and strawberries.

Dr. Ryan Dickson, a specialist in hydroponic root zone management at the University of Arkansas, will present on the “Long-Cane” technique for soilless caneberry production. Dr. Neil Mattson, a CEA expert from Cornell University, will share insights on greenhouse and high tunnel strawberry production.

The conference will also feature a robust trade show floor with industry exhibitors and a wide range of educational sessions. If you're interested in attending, registration is now open and you can sign up [here](#).

Oberland Agriscience introduces BSFL Frass

Insects are gaining ground in CEA, and not just as pests or biocontrol agents. While biological control has been a staple of integrated pest management for years, insects are now playing broader roles in food and fertilizer production systems.

Oberland Agriscience recently introduced **BSFL Frass**, a fertilizer made from the waste of Black Soldier Fly Larvae (BSFL). If you're unfamiliar with Black Soldier Flies, they're essentially the garbage disposals of the insect world, capable of thriving on a wide variety of organic waste, from manure and food scraps to meat. By feeding agricultural waste to their larvae and collecting the resulting frass (yet another term for manure), Oberland is helping close the loop between waste management and crop fertility.

BSFL Frass has already shown promise as a field fertilizer for crops like **tomatoes**, **lettuce**, and **strawberries**. However, its use in controlled environments, especially traditional greenhouse crops, remains underexplored. As a solid, slow-release material, BSFL frass isn't suitable for recirculating hydroponic systems, but it can be used effectively in containers and potted media-based setups.

And if you're in aquaponics, the larvae themselves make an excellent, high-protein feed source for fish like tilapia. You can even raise BSF on-site to process your own plant waste, like roots and leaf debris, turning a disposal problem into a valuable resource, and possibly even a side hustle.



Dr. Jake Holley
Editor-at-Large
Inside Grower

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