

Vertical Farming Tech Boom, Leafy Greens Guide & New Greenhouses



Greenhouse vegetable news from GrowerTalks magazine



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inside GROWER

Controlled Environment Agriculture

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Premier Tech Moves Into VF
Tech
Japan's Vertical Farm Goals
CEA Alliance New Guide
New Propagation Greenhouse
Salad Days New Greenhouse

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Premier Tech Announces End-to-End Vertical Farm Tech

Premier Tech has announced its entry into end-to-end vertical farming automation. Many in the industry know the company for its Pro-Mix growing media and AGTIV inoculants, but this marks a notable shift into hardware and software, specifically environmental control, water quality and automation systems.

This move is driven by the acquisitions of Inno-3B, a Canadian company specializing in modular, automated vertical farming equipment, and Artechno, a Dutch firm with a strong portfolio in water filtration and disinfection technology for controlled environment agriculture. Together, these additions position Premier Tech to offer a more comprehensive, integrated solution to vertical farm operators.

The timing is interesting. We are watching companies like AeroFarms and Plenty struggle to maintain footing, while others like 80 Acres Farms and Vertical Harvest show more promising trajectories. The next five to 10 years should clarify whether these are isolated outcomes or indicators of a broader trend.

One particularly intriguing aspect of Premier Tech's direction is the potential to address a long-standing gap in the vertical farming sector: the lack of widely adopted, proven suppliers. In greenhouse production, there is a well-established playbook. Growers can source structures from companies like KUBO or Prospiant, install control systems from Argus Controls Systems, Priva or Wadsworth Control Systems, and deploy hydroponic systems from CropKing or AmHydro. The result is a system with a known pathway to profitability, assuming execution is sound.

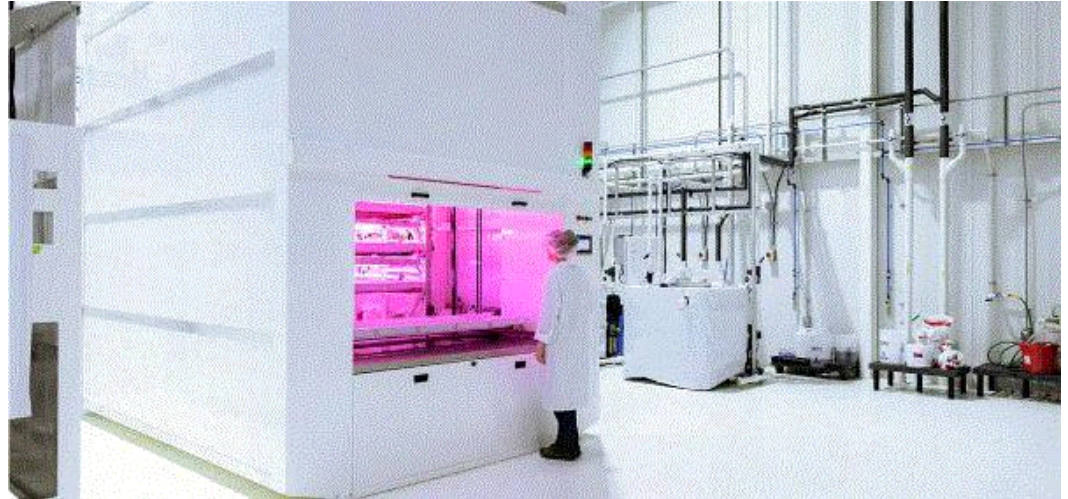
Because greenhouse infrastructure is relatively mature, few people argue that the physical build is the limiting factor. Instead, challenges tend to center on labor, energy management, marketing and sales, and overall operational execution. Vertical farming, by contrast, still lacks that level of standardization. The range of approaches, including white versus pink lighting, horizontal versus vertical layouts, substrate versus aeroponics, and varying degrees of automation, makes it difficult to pinpoint where systems succeed or fail.

High energy costs are often cited as the primary barrier to profitability, but the success of certain operators suggests the story is more nuanced. Strategy, system design and execution likely play a

larger role than the industry has fully accounted for.

If Premier Tech's expansion proves successful, it could help move the industry closer to a long-sought outcome: a repeatable "recipe" for hardware and production strategy that consistently works. If vertical agriculture is to deliver on its promise, a shift toward greater standardization and proven system design seems not just likely, but necessary.

Read more about it [here](#).



A look at the development of Premier Tech's new Vertical Ag system.



Japanese Government Highlights Vertical Farm Industry

The Government of Japan has [recently highlighted](#) its domestic vertical farming sector, showcasing both operational farms and positioning the country as a hub for CEA innovation and technology development.

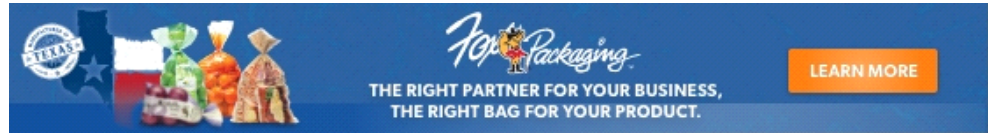
One of the flagship examples is Techno Farm Keihanna. Operating since 2018, the facility openly acknowledges that its first several years were defined by trial and error. Despite that iterative process, the farm has now reached a level of steady, stable production, something it views as a core strength. The team remains optimistic that continued advances in automation will further reduce production costs and improve overall efficiency.

On the technology side, Japan is also emphasizing companies like Mebiol Inc. Mebiol has developed a semipermeable film that allows water and nutrients to pass through while blocking pathogens from entering the root zone.

Interestingly, the membrane permits limited root penetration, enabling crops like leafy greens to physically anchor into the material. [Demonstrations of the system are striking](#), with crops remaining attached even when the film is lifted and shaken. The implications are significant, particularly for crops like spinach that are prone to Pythium root rot, as well as for improving food safety and reducing the risk of cross-contamination.

As the broader conversation in vertical farming shifts toward specialized technology suppliers rather than fully in-house, proprietary systems, Japan appears to be positioning itself as a central player in the CEA technology ecosystem. While the Netherlands continues to dominate greenhouse innovation, Japan's focused push into indoor and vertical farming technologies could carve out a distinct leadership role

within this segment.



CEA Alliance New Leafy Green Guide

The CEA Alliance has released the second edition of its Commodity Specific Food Safety Guidelines for Controlled Environment Agriculture, this one focused on leafy greens and herbs. This updated version reflects both the rapid pace of growth in the CEA industry and the increasing demand for clear, practical guidance around food safety in these systems.

As controlled environment production continues to scale, food safety is becoming less of a “check-the-box” exercise and more of a core operational requirement. Standardized guidance like this helps bridge the gap between emerging production methods and established regulatory expectations, particularly for operators navigating audits, certifications and retail partnerships.

This second edition builds on the original guide published in 2023, incorporating updated practices, lessons learned and evolving industry standards. It is available as a [free download here](#), making it a valuable resource for both new entrants and established growers looking to refine their food safety programs.



New Propagation Greenhouse

Just northeast of the main Leamington greenhouse vegetable production hub, Glencoe, Ontario is now home to a newly completed \$75 million propagation greenhouse developed by Ontario Plants Propagation Limited. The site selection was intentional. Positioned near major highways, the facility can efficiently serve growers in both Leamington and Niagara, while maintaining enough distance from production greenhouses to reduce the risk of pest transfer.

As Ontario's greenhouse industry continues to expand, so does the demand for high-quality starting material. This facility is designed with that growth in mind. Ontario Plants is currently managing approximately 120 acres in Glencoe, with a phased development plan that adds greenhouse space in roughly 13-acre increments. The newly completed structure represents the first of three planned phases, with additional expansion expected as demand continues to rise.



A look inside Ontario Plants Propagation Limited's new greenhouse.

Beyond production capacity, the project also reflects a broader investment in the local community. The region has shown strong support for agricultural development, and the operation is expected to create a wide range of jobs, from research and laboratory roles to seasonal production positions. With plans that include workforce housing and a focus on long-term sustainability, Ontario Plants is positioning itself not just as a supplier, but as a cornerstone of the region's evolving greenhouse ecosystem.

Check out the [link here](#) for more information.



Salad Days Builds New Greenhouse

Mississippi-based company Salad Days has recently announced construction of a new, larger greenhouse to support continued growth in their hydroponic leafy green operation.

What stands out most about this operation is the story behind it. It is easy, especially in academic settings, to question how much real-world impact research and extension efforts actually have. Salad Days offers a compelling counterpoint. Founders Jamie Redmond and Leigh Bailey made the transition from real estate into controlled environment agriculture by first investing heavily in education. They spent two years learning the industry, visiting growers, and attending workshops, including well-known programs from University of Arizona Controlled Environment Agriculture Center (CEAC).

It is a reminder that the institutions leading these efforts, including University of Arizona, The Ohio State University, University of Florida, and initiatives like GLASE, are playing a meaningful role in training the next wave of growers entering the space.

The new greenhouse represents a major scale-up. Production is expected to increase from roughly 250,000 heads of lettuce per year to around 3 million, more than a tenfold jump. The company is targeting a distribution radius of about 200 miles, covering a significant portion of the American South.

There is a broader trend taking shape here. Regions like Southern Ontario are pushing southward into U.S. markets, while at the same time, locally rooted greenhouse operations are scaling up within the region itself. Whether driven by large-scale expansion or grassroots growth, it's good to see success on both sides of the border.

Read more about the Salad Days expansion [here](#).



Founders Jamie and Leigh in their first production greenhouse. Photo credit Salad Days.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Jake Holley'.

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