

# Post-Turkey Day Grab Bag; AppHarvest & Possible Pitfalls



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## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

More to Learn!  
 Education Continued  
 Indoor AgTech Moves  
 Acuity Acquires Arize  
 Inside AppHarvest  
 Possible Pitfalls of VF

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## More to Learn: Education Abounds!

I hope everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable Thanksgiving/Black Friday/Small Business Saturday/Rivalry Weekend. It was a busy one—we traveled to see family, got our live Christmas tree and ... well, we won't talk about that Ohio State-Michigan game.

Now, let's turn our sights to what you can learn coming up in the next couple of months (in person and virtually). There's a lot of opportunity to really hone your environments, consider your crops and just generally learn about new production methods and research. Here are two options:

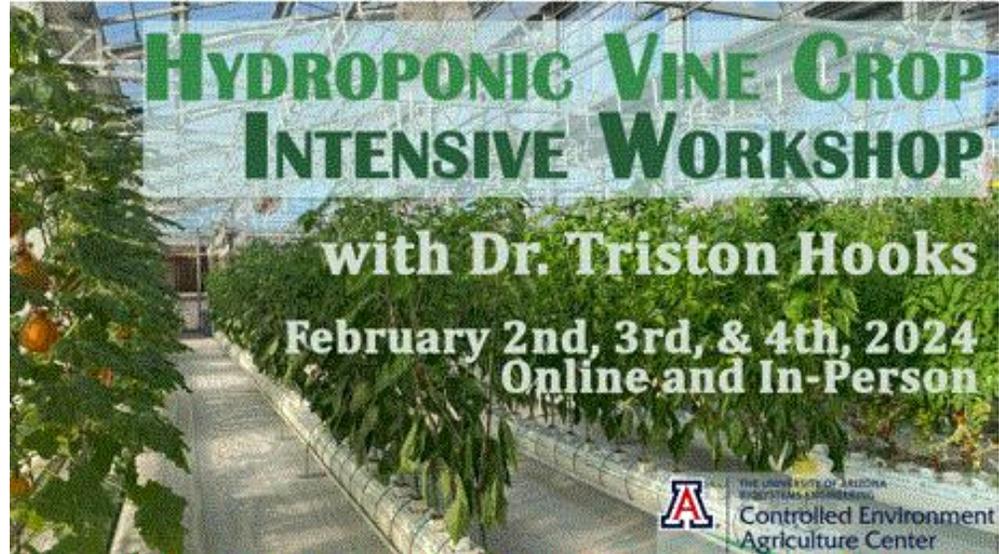
### The Hydroponic Vine Crop Intensive Workshop—CEAC

This annual event through the University of Arizona's CEAC is a three-day, in-person or online workshop that takes you through everything you need to know about indoor production for tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and more. The workshop runs Friday, February 2 to Sunday,



February 4, and if you can swing getting there in person, I would recommend it, as there are a number of hands-on activities planned. Specific topics include propagation, plant steering, nutrient solutions, harvesting, pest management and more.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see more and register.



#### Greenhouse Crop Production & Engineering Design Short Course—CEAC

Another option coming up, and now in its 23rd year, is the Short Course hosted by the above-mentioned U of A's CEAC, where you'll learn more about the environment of indoor production as well as hear the latest in research and network with the brightest in the industry. The Short Course runs in person and online as well, Wednesday, March 13 to Friday, March 15.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see the full schedule and register.



#### Education Continued ...

I told you there's a lot of education coming up! Here are three more:



### **Introduction to Greenhouse Environmental Control for Crop Production— ADVANCEA Academy**

This is a new 13-week certificate course (January 4 – March 28) to provide you with the foundation essential to greenhouse environmental control for commonly grown crops. The course is designed to be the equivalent of an upper-level college course and requires entry-level understanding of modern greenhouse production systems. Attendees participate in two live online lectures every Thursday from 6 to 8 p.m. Eastern, or view recorded lectures. You can read more about the course, see the lecturers (a very impressive lineup!) and register [HERE](#).

A note on this one: I asked Chieri Kubota at OHCEAC what ADVANCEA is about, and how it may relate to the OptimIA research also being done by a consortium of academics. Here's what she relayed to me:

"ADVANCEA project is (a) more engineering-oriented project to develop new technologies for greenhouse controlled environment, while OptimIA is a horticulture and plant science oriented project to find optimum plant growing conditions in vertical farm type of environment. (The) two projects have a common objective—outreach and workforce development. As OptimIA project is ending soon, we are going to integrate the extension effort by expanding the scope of indoor ag science café, for example. Specific objectives of ADVANCEA and OptimIA projects can be found in the following webpages."

ADVANCEA project site: <https://www.ceaforum.org/>

OptimIA project site: <http://scri-optimia.org/>

### **Prospiant's Webinar on Leafy Greens**

If you are a lettuce producer, you don't have to leave your desk for this one: Prospiant recently did its first webinar related to leafy greens. I missed telling you about it in time to see it live, but you can visit their [YouTube page](#) to watch it at your leisure.

Also, you can see their upcoming webinar listing [HERE](#) by clicking the Upcoming tab. In fact, there's one scheduled for February 22 called "Everything you need to know before purchasing a greenhouse for leafy greens." If that sounds interesting to you, register for it today!

### **Our Webinar on Greenhouse Logistics**

We have a webinar coming up, too, on Thursday, December 7 at 1 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central.

The official title is "**Overcoming the Challenges of Logistics Planning for Greenhouse Production,**" in which Bossman Beytes hosts guest expert Fanny Laliberté, Berger's director of purchasing and supply chain.

You won't want to miss when Fanny shares best practices and tools for improving operational efficiency, which is something anyone can benefit from. She'll talk about the three components to logistics: managing external partners, inventory management and project management.

It takes place at 1 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central on Thursday, December 7.

Register for free at [www.growertalks.com/webinars](http://www.growertalks.com/webinars).



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## Indoor AgTech Moves to the Midwest

Previously in New York City, the 7th annual **Indoor AgTech Innovation Summit** moves in 2024 to ... drumroll please ... Chicago! Great news for us, as it's right in our backyard. The meeting of the agtech minds will take place June 24-25 at the Marriott Marquis Chicago.



Last year, more than 500 industry members came together for discussions and to hear panels and speakers talk about the future of indoor production. Watch the website for more details as they emerge, and add it to your travel calendar.



## Acuity Adds New Family of Lights

Technology company **Acuity Brands** has acquired the Arize family of hort lighting products from Current Lighting Solutions (previously GE Current), and aligned itself with **HortAmericas** to distribute the lineup in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

The transaction for the lighting products is expected to be finalized by the end of January, and the HortAmericas agreement will go into effect once the transaction is complete.

"By adding these high-powered, greenhouse-focused luminaires to our horticulture lighting portfolio, Acuity Brands will be positioned to greatly expand our product offering to the fast-growing controlled environment agriculture market, while taking advantage of our lighting and controls expertise to help growers increase productivity while decreasing energy consumption," said Tony Gineris, vice president and general manager of Industrial and Outdoor at Acuity Brands, in a statement.

HortAmericas President Chris Higgins noted in the announcement that his company was grateful to have the opportunity to work with Current Lighting to help develop the lineup of LED grow lights. "We are now excited to partner with Acuity Brands and continue building on the success, as well as the products, technology and services, so many growers have come to depend on."



## ICYMI: Inside AppHarvest

I wish I had a better story to share about the fall of AppHarvest. I never root against any of the growers in our CEA industry, nor want to see anyone fail.

Last week Grist.com released an inside look at the demise of AppHarvest, and what was happening from the very beginning, based on (anonymous) employee interviews. You can read it [HERE](#).



I cannot verify the validity of all the claims made in this article, but I do think it is worth sharing because there are some definite lessons to be learned. One is an unerring focus on worker safety, particularly as we experience an increasing number of extreme temperature days. Another is to ensure workers are trained properly for safety and for the ultimate success of the crop. And finally, technology can never be the only solution—it is a tool growers use along with their own horticulture knowledge to grow the best crop they can.

Cordially disagree? Want to tell me more about what you think? Email me at [jpolarz@ballpublishing.com](mailto:jpolarz@ballpublishing.com).

## Avoid These Vertical Farm Pitfalls!

Speaking of avoiding major issues, if you are considering a vertical farm, or are looking to expand or build a new facility, you should check out [THIS ARTICLE](#) in our November issue of *Inside Grower* by mechanical engineer Erika Summers on how to avoid serious pitfalls.

Heck, if you're building a greenhouse, you might want to check it out, too!



Visit [www.inside-grower.com](http://www.inside-grower.com) to see the entire November issue.

As always, feel free to email me at [jpolanz@ballpublishing.com](mailto:jpolanz@ballpublishing.com) with comments, questions, news and views.

Until next time,

Jennifer Polanz  
Editor-at-Large  
Inside Grower

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