

Numbers worthy of a story; plus, new CEA framework



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Organic Sales Up
Wholesum's Numbers
CEA Sustainable Guidelines
Solar Advancements
Report from the MT Outpost

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Organic Sales On the Rise

The Quarter 1 report on organic produce sales from Category Partners shows that organics are once again on the upswing. Organic produce sales in dollars grew by 4.1% over the same period last year, while sales by volume were up 3.4%. Berries reigned as the top organic category in dollars, up 13%. But the news for packaged salads and lettuce was less rosy; they were down 6.4% in sales and 8.4% in volume.

As has been the case recently, the South continued to show the largest growth in organic sales, followed closely by the Midwest region.



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A Sustainability Report With Great Infographics

For organic greenhouse produce grower Wholesum, sustainability reports have been an annual tradition. This year's report, which they call their "2023 Conscientious Company Report," is now available. The 24-page document touches on a number of sustainability topics, but what I appreciate most about it are the infographics (which, I would guess also get used in a variety of other communications/marketing endeavors). I like numbers that tell a bigger story: the 45,500 labor hours spent on manual pest control and the 1,923,381 ladybugs produced in-house for IPM, along with 2,237 banker plants. That's way better than saying "We use integrated pest management."



Wholesum also details some of their energy usage, charitable contributions, packaging plans and advancements in human resources. You can learn more and find the report [HERE](#).



Sustainability Framework for CEA

The CEA Alliance just put together the industry's first sustainability framework for indoor growers (developed by indoor growers). Growers had been finding that existing guidelines for outdoor growers simply did not fit the scope or address the impacts of indoor growing. The new framework, which was developed via stakeholder working groups, introduces 60 metrics that support 20 key performance indicators (KPIs). That includes:

- Natural resource and climate impacts
- Pesticide use
- Waste generation
- Food safety
- Employment practices
- Community engagement
- Food security impacts

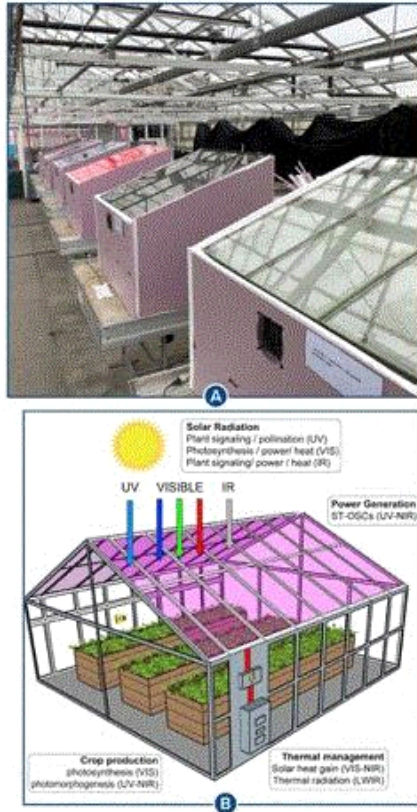
CEA Alliance Executive Director Tom Stenzel, said, "The CEA Alliance believes an industry-led commitment to standardized measurement is important to achieving and understanding true value; that's why we've proactively come together to develop these metrics. We hope this framework will support indoor growers at every stage of their sustainability journey, as well as encourage outdoor growers, packers and processors to include the entire supply chain from field to finished product in their measurement of impacts."

You can download the new framework [HERE](#).



Solar Advancements

If you're wondering if solar panels might be right for your greenhouse now or in the future, go dig out that June issue of *GrowerTalks* (or read it online [HERE](#).)



Authors Eric J. Stallknecht, Richard R. Lunt & Erik S. Runkle walk you through the basics in Part 1 of solar energy for the greenhouse (also, [Part 2](#) on the research behind solar for the greenhouse just dropped on the *GrowerTalks* website). While research is ongoing, there are some promising preliminary findings for the use of transparent photovoltaic panels.

Report from the MT Outpost

June always fills me up, from the deep grass in the meadow, to the thunderstorms, wildflowers and neighborhood visitors. A few of the highlights this month: The late-blooming wildflowers on our big morning walks. Two new fox kits making daily appearances at the the bend in the road. A morning list of bird songs. Excellent germination in the garden seeds, which I planted much later than normal. The first fawn of the year bouncing up the hill. Finding the first seedlings after planting a new high-elevation wildflower mix. A special delivery of nine more tomatoes from a neighbor who has a greenhouse and “can’t stop planting tomato seeds.”



Of course, when you have more than 20-acres under foot, the list of should do's is always long, but somehow, June makes the shoulds less daunting and the abundant growth more marvel worthy.

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer".

Jennifer Duffield White

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