


# Tomato Virus; Hemp Rules & Cannabis Research


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## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

More Survey Responses  
HydraFiber Webinar  
Tomato Virus News  
USDA's Webinar on Hemp  
New Cannabis Research



## More Survey Responses: Hyper Local Produce

This week I want to continue our look at this year's survey results. I asked what our readers grow in, and it looks to be mostly greenhouses (84%), with some indoor vertical farms (22%), high tunnels (16%) and shipping containers (8%). There's a lot of mixed use going on, too, with growers using a combination of methods.

The customer breakdown is an interesting one, too. When asked to whom do you sell, the answers were the following:

- 54% farmers markets
- 42% garden centers
- 35% grocery stores
- 35% restaurants & food distributors
- 23% community supported agriculture programs (CSAs)

Our readers are hyper local, too, with many of them only delivering product within 10 miles (50%), or between 11 to 50 miles (23%). The numbers get smaller the further out we go, with 10% delivering up to 100 miles away, and 2.5% delivering up to 150 miles away. About 15% deliver more than 150 miles away.

Next issue we'll get into some of the biggest concerns our readers are experiencing. Stay tuned, and thanks to everyone who filled out the survey!



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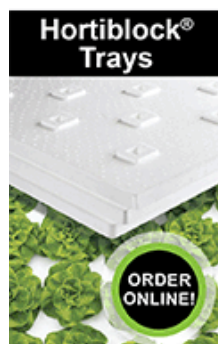


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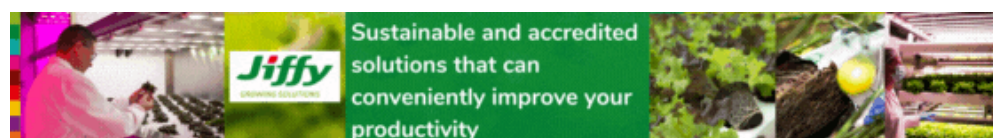
## Wood Fiber Webinar

Have you been thinking about transitioning your media program to wood fiber from perlite, peat, pine bark and coir? Now you can hear about the differences in a free webinar this Thursday, March 14 at 1 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central.



Hosted by our own Chris Beytes, webinar guests will hear from experts Dr. Glenn Fain of Auburn University and Daniel Norden, senior R & D manager and technical specialist manager for Profile Products' horticulture business. Together they will talk about the evolution of wood fiber in growing media, as well as introduce the new HydraFiber Advanced Substrate. This webinar is the first in a multi-part series sponsored by HydraFiber featuring independent research and trials by academics and growing experts. This webinar will focus on helping growers build an efficient and effective media program.

Visit [www.growertalks.com/webinars/](http://www.growertalks.com/webinars/) to sign up. If you miss it the day of the event, you can access the archived webinar at the same link.



## Tomato Virus Causes Concern

Media outlets are reporting nervousness among European tomato greenhouse growers after publication in a new disease report that the tomato brown rugose fruit virus (ToBRFV) was found in a German tomato greenhouse. The virus, which also can impact sweet peppers, can wipe out an entire crop, and can be spread by plant handling, cutting and even during pollination by bumblebees. It had previously only been found in Jordan and Israel.

What's a little more unsettling is that after following a series of links, I found there was a greenhouse in Santa Barbara County, California, that may have experienced a crop with the virus in September 2018, according to the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA). A sample was sent to a plant pathologist in South Carolina from the unnamed greenhouse, and identified as ToBRFV. By the time the positive identification happened and more investigation was about to take place, the greenhouse had already destroyed the entire crop. No official sample could be taken to confirm the virus.

The CDFA's Pest Rating for this virus has valuable information for all growers who may not be



familiar with ToBRFV. [Click HERE](#) to see the website.



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## Public Comment on Hemp in USDA Webinar

The USDA is hosting a webinar on the 2018 Farm Bill Wednesday, March 13, soliciting public comment about the domestic hemp production program. The webinar will be a long one, running from Noon to 3 p.m., and will provide a chance for up to 1,000 people at a time to log on, but only 60 speakers during the course of the event. Each speaker will have a maximum of three minutes and must submit a written copy of their comments to [farmbill.hemp@usa.gov](mailto:farmbill.hemp@usa.gov) by today, March 11.

Here's the link to register:

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_L2G9K7cXTkayQ2O1\\_0AP0g](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_L2G9K7cXTkayQ2O1_0AP0g) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The USDA has provided a link, too, to the [Marketing Program for the Commercial Production of Hemp webpage](#).



## New Cannabis Research

On the cannabis side of the industry, [Dark Heart Nursery](#) announced recently that it has been the first organization to positively identify hop latent viroid (HpLVd) as the cause of “dudding” in cannabis. Dudding, according to Dark Heart Nursery researchers, is a name used for a variety of symptoms, including loss of vigor, stunting, reduction in yield and/or potency and changes in morphology.

Dr. Rick Crum, an expert on cannabis plant pathology, says the affliction can show in as many as 35% of observed plants, meaning the discovery is quite a big deal for cannabis growers. Since 2018, Dark Heart Nursery has been successfully testing for and eliminating HpLVd through a patent-pending clean plant process.



“The positive identification of the HpLVd pathogen and our patent-pending clean plant process to test for and eliminate it represent a significant advance toward keeping cannabis crops healthy and supporting long-term business growth for cultivators,” says Dan Grace, founder and president of Dark Heart Nursery. He notes, too, the arrival of Dr. Jeremy Warren as Director of Plant Health

for the company. "With Dr. Warren at the helm we are incredibly excited to now offer diagnostic and curative services for HpLVd to licensed cannabis businesses in California, as well as continue our research in identifying and eradicating additional cannabis-infecting pathogens."



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

Until next time,

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

Jennifer Polanz  
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