Volume 2024 Monday, March 18, 2024 Edition 9

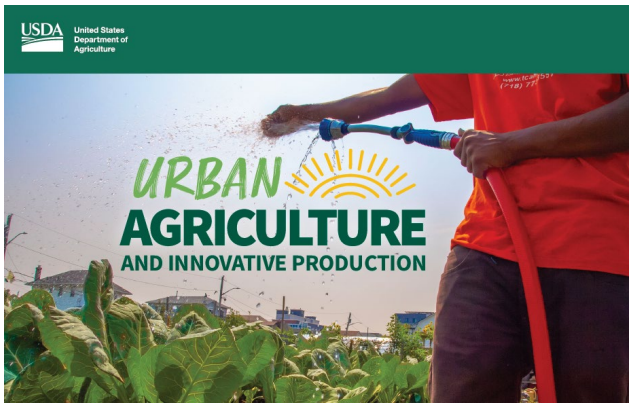
THE MICROGREENS WEEKLY

The Microgreens Weekly Digest, "Delivered to Your Inbox Every Monday," is your summary digest of the latest microgreens, urban farming, and vertical farming new trends and exciting startup stories from around the world.

International Week of Happiness, Poetry, Forests, Water, and The Elimination of Racial Discrimination

This Week: Monday, March 18, 2024

USDA Announces Grants For Urban Agriculture And Innovative Production



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering grants of up to **$6.1 million** through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP).

The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories: *Planning Projects* and *Implementation Projects*. USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 9, 2024.

Planning Projects initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs.

> Projects may target areas of food access, education, business, and startup costs for new farmers, as well as the development of plans related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

Implementation Projects accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor, and other agricultural practices that serve farmers and communities.

> Projects may improve local food access, include collaboration with partner organizations, and support infrastructure needs, emerging technologies, and educational endeavors.

A pre-recorded webinar on the Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants webpage provides an overview of the grants' purpose, project types, eligibility, and basic requirements for submitting an application.

You will also find a fact sheet and frequently asked questions on that page.

OUAIP was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

It works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture and innovative production.

The grants are part of a broad USDA investment in urban agriculture. USDA UAIP Competitive Grant

A Natural Compound Derived From Broccoli May Help Prevent And Treat Stroke.

Broccoli and other cruciferous veggies contain a compound called *sulforaphane* that may help prevent and treat stroke.

Australian researchers found that adding *sulforaphane* to a common stroke medication dramatically increased its effectiveness without causing bleeding side effects.

The study suggests that eating more broccoli, especially nutrient-packed microgreens, could be a simple but powerful way to protect brain health and reduce stroke risk. While more research is needed, these findings offer an exciting glimpse into the potential of food as medicine.

So go ahead and add an extra helping of broccoli to your plate - your brain might thank you for it!

And if you're feeling adventurous, *try throwing some broccoli microgreens* into your next salad or smoothie for a concentrated dose of veggie goodness.

Every little bit counts when it comes to nourishing your body and mind. Guan, Ivy A., et al., "Integrating Phenotypic and Chemoproteomic Approaches to Identify Covalent Targets of Dietary Electrophiles in Platelets." ACS Central Science, American Chemical Society, Jan. 2024

Is Georgia A Hotbed For Indoor Farming?

While microgreens were not explicitly mentioned at the recent Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference in Savannah, Georgia, the growing trend of controlled environment agriculture (CEA) has significant implications for these tiny, nutrient-packed greens.

CEA, also known as indoor farming, is gaining momentum in the southern United States, with Georgia emerging as a hotbed for these operations. The advantages of CEA are numerous, including consistent year-round production, improved control of growth factors, higher yields, water conservation, decreased pest and disease pressure, high-quality products, and enhanced food safety and security.

These benefits make CEA an ideal method for growing microgreens, which are high-value crops that can be produced quickly and consistently in a controlled environment. The ability to grow and sell food year-round is particularly appealing to entrepreneurs like Grant Anderson, who founded Better Fresh Farms in Georgia after recognizing the potential for a profitable, 52-week-a-year business model.

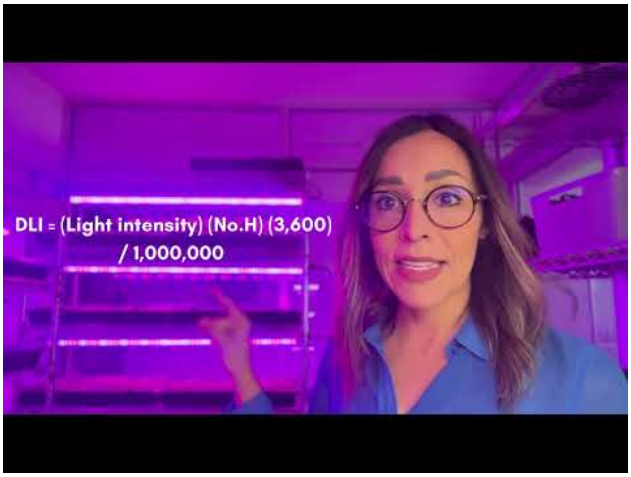
Despite some disadvantages, such as specialized labor requirements, energy intensity,

and high capital investment, industry experts believe that CEA is one of the most exciting developments in agriculture, particularly for the fruit and vegetable sector.

As CEA continues to gain traction, more growers will likely turn to microgreens as a profitable and sustainable crop to grow in their indoor farming operations. The future looks bright for these tiny greens and the innovative farmers who choose to cultivate them in controlled environments. Thomas Skernivitiz, Growing Produce 2024-03-12

How Many Hours Should I Turn On My Lamps In My Microgreens Farm?

Proper lighting is crucial for the success of vertical farming, especially when growing microgreens.



Click to watch the video.

By using a light sensor to measure light intensity (PPFD) and considering the recommended daily light integral (DLI), farmers can calculate the optimal number of light hours for their leafy greens. This precision not only promotes efficient energy use but also prevents issues like tip burn, which can result from excessive light exposure. With careful lighting management, vertical farmers can cultivate thriving, high-quality microgreens. Hort America, 2024-03-14.

The Featured Article

In 1963, H.I.M., Haile Selassie, then Emporer of Ethiopia, declared in a speech at the U.N. General Assembly,

> "…and until the color of a man's skin is of no more significance than the color of his eyes, there shall be war…"

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has been observed annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69

people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid "pass laws" in 1960 – the Sharpeville Massacre.

So, building on our theme of International Women's Month, turn your attention to Petersburg, NY, USA, and an incredible woman named Leah Penniman and Soul Fire Farm.

Leah Penniman, co-founder of Soul Fire Farm in upstate New York, is a trailblazer in the movement to promote Black, Brown, and Indigenous farmers.

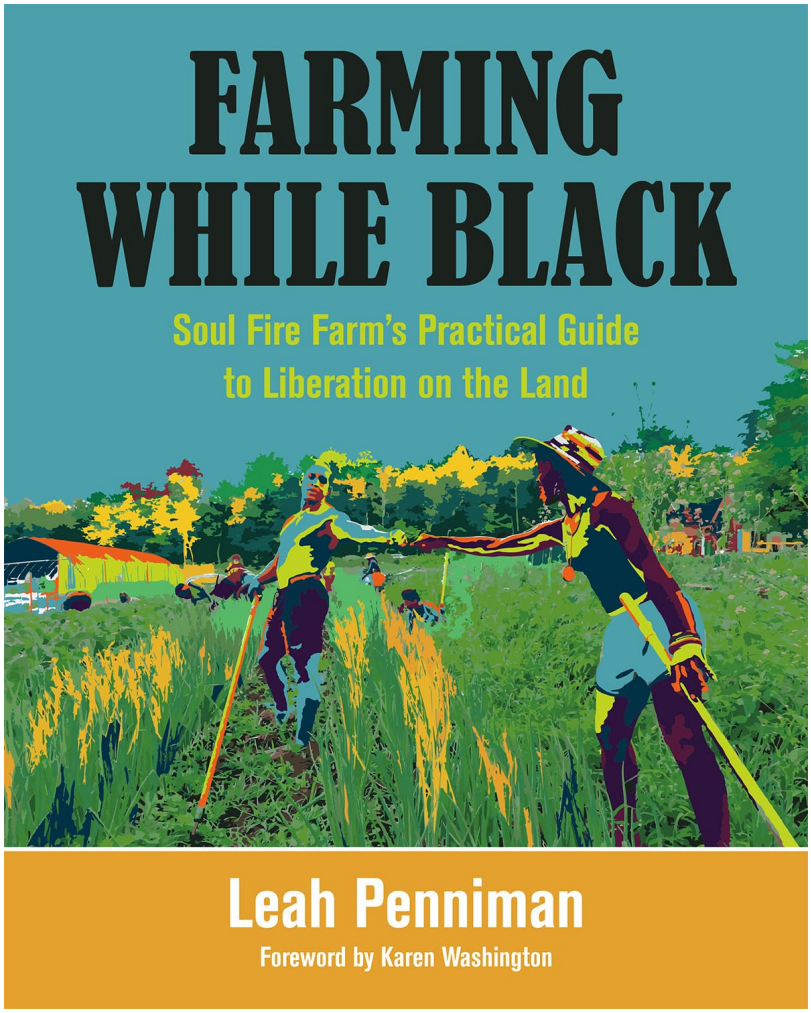
> Her farm not only provides fresh produce to communities living in "food apartheid" but also trains hundreds of aspiring farmers in regenerative agriculture practices that combat climate change.

Penniman's journey began with tears when she moved her family from Albany's impoverished South End to rural Petersburg.

However, as Soul Fire Farm grew, so did her purpose. Penniman's **2018 book, "Farming While Black**," catapulted her to the forefront of the food justice movement, earning her a James Beard Leadership award.

Soul Fire Farm's success is a testament to the growing interest in farming among people of color, refuting the myth that they are uninterested in agriculture. The farm's waiting list for classes on regenerative farming is hundreds long, and its programs have trained countless individuals and inspired the creation of several new farms.

Central to Penniman's mission is the fight against discrimination in American farming. Black farmers, once 14% of the agricultural population, now make up just 2% due to systemic racism and denial of resources. Soul Fire Farm aims to reclaim this legacy and empower a new generation of diverse farmers.



Equally important is the farm's commitment to mitigating climate change through regenerative practices.

By eschewing pesticides and promoting no-till farming, composting, and other ancestral methods, Soul Fire Farm demonstrates how agriculture can capture carbon in the soil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Penniman's influence extends far beyond her farm.

She is part of a network of activists working to reshape the food system and address the disproportionate impact of climate change on communities of color.

Her message resonates with those seeking a more just and sustainable future.

As Soul Fire Farm continues to thrive, Penniman remains guided by a deep connection to the ancestors and a fierce dedication to her mission.

Click to watch the video.

Her work serves as an inspiring example of how one family farm can make a difference in the fight against racism and climate change, offering hope for a more equitable and resilient food system. Darryl Fears, Washington Post

Locally Grown – A Fad Or A Trend? Dead Or Alive?

Coming out of the 11th Indoor Ag-Con, the largest indoor farming conference last week, we've got some fantastic news: *locally-grown produce is thriving, and it's here to stay!*

In a very insightful article, Chris Higgins of Urban AG News makes the case that locally grown is alive and well.

The USDA and other farming trend watchers have made it clear that people are more interested than ever in supporting their local farmers and enjoying the freshest, most flavorful produce around.

But here's the thing: the values that make locally grown so special – *the commitment to quality, sustainability, and community* – aren't always easy to scale up or market to the average shopper. Big retailers that focus on low prices might not be the best fit for our unique offerings.

So, what does that mean for us? It means we have an incredible opportunity to build something extraordinary – *a profitable microgreens farm that's sized just right and financed in a way that lets us stay true to our values.* We get to focus on those discerning consumers who appreciate the extra care and attention we put into every tray of microgreens and who

are willing to pay a little more for produce that's grown with love and integrity.

Building a successful local microgreens farm takes creativity, passion, and a deep connection to our community. But when we get it right, there's nothing more rewarding than knowing we're nourishing our neighbors with the very best food around.

So, let's embrace the challenge, support each other, and show the world just how incredible locally grown microgreens can be. Together, we can create something extraordinary – and delicious! Urban AG News, 2024-03-04

Every Thought About A Microgreens Container Farm?

On March 1st, 2024, Vancouver-based urban agriculture innovator *FarmAnywhere* announced the launch of its new leasing and financing programs, a significant step towards democratizing urban farming in Canada and the U.S.

This move aligns with FarmAnywhere's mission to support sustainability and community empowerment by making their advanced vertical farming technology more accessible.

Container farming for microgreens involves growing these nutrient-dense young plants in controlled

environment agriculture (CEA) systems, such as shipping containers outfitted with hydroponic or soil-based systems, LED lighting, and climate control. This method allows for year-round production, efficient use of space, and minimal water usage compared to traditional farming methods.

> It's trendy in urban areas where space is at a premium and demand for fresh, locally grown produce is high. Container farms can produce a variety of microgreens, offering a sustainable solution to meet this demand while reducing transportation costs and carbon footprint.

These operations can be highly automated, reducing labor costs and increasing efficiency. Farm Anywhere, 2024-03-01

Global Fenugreek Microgreens Market: $197.39 Billion by 2030

The global fenugreek microgreens market is experiencing significant growth, driven by increasing consumer interest in health and wellness.

These nutrient-packed greens are gaining popularity among both commercial and residential end-users, with indoor vertical farming leading the way in efficient cultivation methods.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of resilient and adaptable farming practices.

At the same time, the trend towards sustainable agriculture aligns with the eco-conscious preferences of modern consumers. As culinary enthusiasts explore innovative applications and online retail dominates distribution, the fenugreek microgreens market is poised for rapid expansion, particularly in the Asia-Pacific and North American regions. **Industry Today, 2024-03-12**

Unlocking New Markets & Building Customer Trust: Certification with CNG

Are you thinking of getting certified but unsure how to get started? Which certifications to choose? What's involved in the process?

Mar 19, 2024, 01:00 p.m. EST

In the upcoming webinar with Certified Naturally Grown, we sit down with Keegan to learn more about their peer-reviewed certification for farmers producing food, flowers, and fiber for their local communities.

This webinar will cover the following:

- What are the differences and similarities between CNG and USDA Organic?
- How does the peer review inspection process work?
- Which CNG standards are most commonly confused?

And there will be a live Q&A session to answer any questions you may have about CNG! **Register**

Brought to you by **Doc Green**, Andrew Neves' personally trained AI assistant. "You may ask me anything about microgreens."

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