

Industry Associations Merge, Aphid Control and CEA Awards

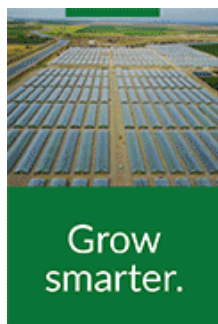


Greenhouse vegetable news from GrowerTalks magazine



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021

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Controlled Environment Agriculture

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Koppert's Aphid Control
PMA + United Fresh
The Future of CEA Webinars
Online Grower Training
CEA Awards
Automation Challenge



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Koppert's New Aphid Control

Pests like aphids and mealybugs can wreak havoc on a wide variety of ornamental, vegetable and herb greenhouse crops.

That's why Koppert Biological Systems recently announced a new aphid, mealybug and Echinothrips biocontrol product called Chrysopa-E, which uses the egg stage of the lacewing, *Chrysoperla carnea*, instead of the larval stage used previously.



Even better, the new product provides greater efficacy at less cost.

“Chrysopa-E can be produced at much lower production costs, so the grower can use many more beneficials at less expense,” says the folks at Koppert. “With Chrysopa-E, the grower has a very large army of biological control agents ready for action.”

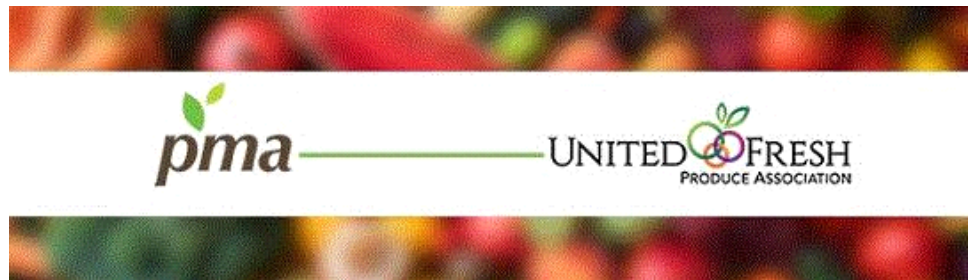
The product can be used preventatively, as well as to knock down a growing infestation. The new product is delivered in a 90-ml canister containing 100,000 eggs versus the larval product that ships in a 6-liter bucket containing 10,000 larvae. The larval product will still be available, though, for use on hotspots.

[CLICK HERE](#) to find out more.



PMA + United Fresh

As someone from outside the produce industry who found her way in after signing on to *Inside Grower*, I found it unusual to have two major industry associations. I thought perhaps it was just because the industry was so big and both likely evolved in different ways to become what they are today.



Well, the boards of directors of the Produce Marketing Association (PMA) and United Fresh Produce Association (United Fresh) have decided it's in the greater interests of the produce industry to have one unified voice. They'll both operate as independent organizations through this year, then unify into one organization to launch January 1, 2022.

“This Agreement reflects the ongoing commitment of both associations to deliver the highest level of value to members,” said Board Chairs Michael Muzyk of United Fresh and Dwight Ferguson of PMA in a media announcement. “Looking ahead, we believe we can accomplish that goal better together building on the synergies and experience of our expert staffs, complementary education programs and member services, and a stronger voice in advocating for our industries.”

That's great, but I was left wondering how controlled environment ag growers would fare in this move, since they were really starting to get recognized by both associations. My fears were unfounded, as I reached out to United Fresh Vice President of Marketing & Communications Mary Coppola, and she replied that the needs of CEA growers would absolutely continue to be represented by the larger organization and resources specific to those growers would be offered. I'll follow up soon with some information about what that will look like in the new organization.

In the meantime, some logistical changes will happen. PMA CEO Cathy Burns and United Fresh CEO Tom Stenzel, who've worked with the boards of directors toward a common set of strategic commitments for the new association, will jointly lead in 2022 as co-CEOs. After that, Cathy will become the sole CEO.

“Through my 28 years of service to our industry, I have long recognized the potential synergies of

our groups building something powerful together,” Tom says. “It is gratifying to me several years before my retirement to find a strong and committed partner in Cathy who believes in this shared vision. I’m looking forward to launching this new organization together, setting the stage to enhance member value while driving greater produce consumption in years ahead.”

You can read the full press release [HERE](#).

Also, if you have more questions, there are FAQs on both [United Fresh's page](#) and [PMA's page](#). If you have additional questions, there are links at the bottom of each page where you can ask more about the merger.



The Future of CEA Webinar Series

The next webinar in a series from Bluelab on the future of CEA is coming up quick, so make sure you register soon. The topic is “Is Indoor Farming Actually Sustainable?” and features Julia Kurnik of World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) and Eric Ellestad of 80 Acres Farms. Why WWF? The organization released a report last year on the impacts of indoor, soilless agriculture. We’ve talked about 80 Acres Farms multiple times in this space—it’s a vertical farm based in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The webinar begins at 2:00 p.m. Eastern on Thursday, April 8. You can register [HERE](#).



Tomatoes at 80 Acres Farms.

If you miss that one, they have another on May 26 called “Can We Grow More Food With Less Resources?” featuring speakers from the Resource Innovation Institute and Elevate Farms.



Online Greenhouse Training

Each year the University of Florida puts on an online greenhouse training course to help growers continually train new and existing staff. Registration is open for this year's slate of classes, and the first course—Greenhouse 101—starts on May 31. All classes are available in English and Spanish.

Each course is completely online and includes pre-recorded videos, an interactive discussion board with Ph.D. professors and quizzes. The course material is available on-demand and two new modules are activated each week during the four-week courses for a total of eight learning modules. Graduates receive a personalized certificate of completion.



Here's this year's lineup:

- **Greenhouse 101:** Runs May 31-June 25 (registration closes June 7)
- **Nutrient Management 1 (Introduction):** July 5-July 30 (registration closes July 12)
- **Costing and Profitability:** August 2-August 27 (registration closes August 9)
- **Disease Management:** September 13-October 8 (registration closes September 20)
- **Weed Management:** October 18-November 12 (registration closes October 25)
- **Hydroponic Vegetable Production:** October 25-November 19 (registration closes November 1).

Each class costs \$249 and there's a 20% discount when an organization registers five or more people.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see more information and to sign up (be sure to check out the levels when signing up—some are more introductory while others are more advanced).

CEA Awards

You know you've made it when you have an awards ceremony dedicated to your craft. Now, there's one for CEA growers, courtesy of Artemis. The company, which specializes in a Cultivation Management Platform for growers, announced the 2021 CEA Awards at the end of March. Nominations are open until April 13 for the following categories:

Top Employer Award
Brand Excellence Award
Health and Safety Award
Sustainability Award
Produce Person of the Year
Cannabis Person of the Year
Innovative New Packaging Award
Innovative New Product Award
Disruptor Award
Rising Star Award
Industry Connector Award

The awards committee is:

- Allison Kopf, CEO of Artemis
- Lawrence Wang, Digital Labs & DxO and EDGE Lead at Cargill
- Steve Graves, Vice President of Business Development at Fluence by OSRAM
- Travis Graham, International Account Manager Lifesciences at Schneider Electric

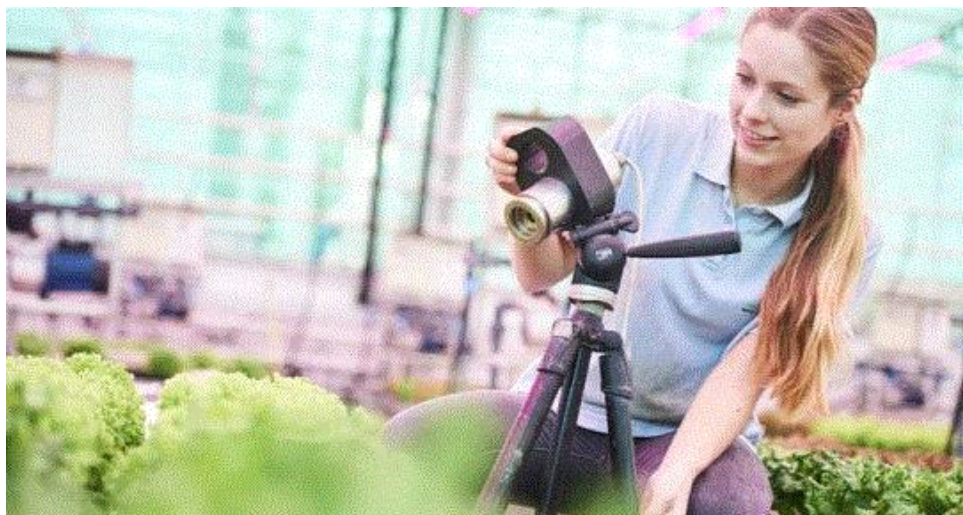
Click the links above or [CLICK HERE](#) to nominate someone today.

ICYMI: Automation Challenge

Your mission, should you choose to accept it (cue "Mission Impossible" music) comes from Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands and Tencent: the 3rd International Autonomous Greenhouse Challenge.

Multidisciplinary teams from around the world will use artificial intelligence to remotely produce lettuce, according to the organization. The goal of this challenge, slated to be held between June 2021 and June 2022, will be a fully automated greenhouse without human interference. This is the first time the challenge has centered around leafy greens. The past two have been cucumber crops and cherry tomato crops.

"Both competitions showed that artificial intelligence can potentially outperform skilled growers in economically growing of crops, hence can potentially control indoor farming in the future," writes the folks at Wageningen University. "However, in former editions, all teams were still using humans in their decision-making. The goal of the third challenge will be a fully automated control without human interference."



This appears to be human interference. Don't do this. Also, avoid naming your team Skynet.

Hmm ... robots and AI running the show? Let's see it.

Participants can pre-register [HERE](#).

As always, feel free to email me at jpolanz@ballpublishing.com with comments, questions, news and views.

Until next time, stay safe and be healthy,



Jennifer Polanz
Editor-at-Large
Inside Grower

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