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# Welcome to e-GRO Edible Alerts!

*If you are looking at this and wondering what you are reading, it is the first Alert in a new e-GRO effort....e-GRO Edible Alerts!*

## Welcome!

On behalf of the e-GRO Team, I'd like to introduce and welcome you to e-GRO Edible Alerts! Next week we will be back to your regularly scheduled e-GRO Alerts focusing on challenges associated with ornamental and floriculture greenhouse crops. But for now, we'd appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with our new e-GRO Edible effort.

## Expanding food crop production

When we talk about 'greenhouse crops' we typically think of floriculture crops such as flowering potted plants and annual and perennial bedding plants, and for good reason. The U.S. floriculture industry has a wholesale value of over \$4 billion dollars and much of this production occurs in greenhouses, so it would make sense that we often think of flowers synonymously with greenhouses. But the times they are a changing!

Many of us have sensed changing production trends, with a stronger emphasis on food crops. We recently got solid data that confirm what we have been suspecting. Between 2009 and 2014, the wholesale value of food crops grown in protected structures increased by over \$192 million dollars (47%) compared to 2009, while the area in production also increased by 22 million square feet (31%) since that time.

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## e-GRO Alert

[www.e-gro.org](http://www.e-gro.org)

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Figure 1. Tomatoes account for nearly half of the wholesale value of food crops grown under protection in the United States.

## Why e-GRO Edible Alerts?

Just like producing ornamental crops in greenhouses, problems can arise during production of food crops. One of the reasons we are starting the e-GRO Edible Alerts is in response to what we are all seeing and experiencing as greenhouse professionals working in Extension. We have been receiving an increasing amount of emails and phone calls from people who are trying to find support for growing food crops in greenhouses and controlled-environments. While you will see a few more e-GRO Edible Alerts this spring during the regular Alert season, we will be developing a new and separate mailing list for e-GRO Edible Alerts later this year.

## What to expect from e-GRO Edible Alerts

Our goal with e-GRO Edible Alerts is to bring problems



Figure 2. A greenhouse is a great controlled environment for producing high-quality and high-value crops such as strawberries.



Figure 3. Lettuce is one of the main crops greenhouses producers are interested in when switching from floriculture to food crops.

and challenges associated with food crop production to your attention, as well as provide you with the insights into preventing these challenges or remedying the problems they create. We are going to be delivering monthly e-GRO Edible Alerts that will address common and timely problems associated with greenhouse and controlled-environment food crop production. Don't worry, we will be sure to talk about tip burn of lettuce and powdery mildew!

The contributors to e-GRO Edible Alerts are going to be some of the same people already contributing to our other e-GRO activities. Since we are all experiencing a changing greenhouse industry, many of us are providing support for greenhouse growers of all crops, including both floriculture and food crops. Additionally, the amount of research on greenhouse and controlled-environment food crop production is increasing, so you know you will be getting the most up-to-date information.

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