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Driscoll's in vertical farm collaboration

Company announces joint development agreement with Plenty to grow strawberries year-round in vertical indoor farm



A Plenty leafy green vertical farm

Berry giant Driscoll's and indoor vertical-farming company Plenty Unlimited have announced a joint development agreement to grow Driscoll's proprietary strawberries year-round in Plenty's vertical indoor farms.

Together, the two companies will work to bring strawberry varieties to market, leveraging the benefits of a controlled growing environment while also creating opportunity for berry expansion into regions that have historically been difficult to serve.

"It's clear that Plenty's vision and capabilities of pioneering the potential of indoor farming technology makes them the leader in this space," said J Miles Reiter, Driscoll's chairman and chief executive. "As one of the few berry companies with a dedicated global R&D programme, we believe our proprietary berries, which are focused on flavour, combined with Plenty's technology leadership will create a competitive

market edge as we expand to more effectively meet the future consumer."

According to the two groups, Plenty will incorporate Driscoll's proprietary genetics and berry expertise into its advanced, indoor farming technology using its plant science expertise.

Through this controlled environment, Plenty aims to "deliver great flavours from Driscoll's varieties", while also optimising for texture and size.

The indoor environment is designed to remove natural unpredictability, allowing both companies to meet the future needs of consumers worldwide, including geographical locations that are not hospitable to growing strawberries.

Using data analytics, machine learning and customised lighting, Plenty's agri-food platform has achieved over 700 per cent yield improvement in leafy greens in the last 24 months while maintaining flavour

"For over 100 years, Driscoll's has been innovating in search of the best-tasting berries," said Nate Storey, co-founder and chief science officer at Plenty. "As they embrace the emergence of indoor farming, we are proud they have chosen Plenty as their collaborator to develop flavourful berries grown indoors in a clean, controlled environment.

"We are aligned in our mission to bring the most delicious food to our consumers while reducing our environmental impact," Storey added. "Our goal is to bring fresh, flavour-forward berries grown locally to consumers around the world."

Driscoll's strawberries will initially be grown and developed in Plenty's Laramie, Wyoming farm, the largest privately-owned vertical farm research and development centre in the world.

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