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By Liam O'Callaghan

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Indoor farm sprouts up in Shanghai



China-based horticulture company Orisis has partnered with a new international joint venture to build an indoor vertical farm

Orisis has signed a contract with Infinite Acres – a joint venture involving three companies, Ocado, Priva Holding and 80 Acres Farms – to build what it says will be the first indoor vertical farm in the Shanghai region.

The farm is set to feature an internal, vertical design consisting of five layers with more than 1,600m² of grow zone area. It will produce varieties of lettuce and leafy greens to supply food-service distributors, grocers, and consumers in the Shanghai area.

The farm will be located in Pinghu Zhejiang, a new agriculture economic development zone in China located about 100 kilometres southwest of Shanghai.

The Infinite Acres joint venture was announced earlier this week, and farm is the partnership's first project.

Ocado, a UK-based online retailer, Priva Holding a Dutch horticulture

technology company and US plant science firm 80 Acres Farm, each own one third equity in the venture.

Together the three companies aim to custom-design, build, install, and maintain automated indoor growing centres near large population centres.

"We are very pleased to be working with Infinite Acres on this project, which is part of a totally new and innovative horticulture development in the Shanghai region," said Yanwen Huang, chief executive officer of Orisis.

"Orisis is partnering with Infinite Acres to fulfil the rapidly growing requirement of chemical-free and high-quality crops in China. This project will demonstrate to China and the rest of the world the indoor food-growing possibilities in densely-populated urban locations."

Tisha Livingston, chief executive of Infinite Acres, said the company hoped this will be the first of many indoor vertical farms in China, which tackle the problem of a shortage of farmland.

"With its growing mega-cities and shortage of arable farmland, China like other nations, faces the challenges of providing healthy, fresh, just-picked produce to its people," Livingston said.

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