

Farm of the Future Opens to the Public on Saturday, March 17

TEMECULA, Calif., March 5, 2012 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Temecula Valley Strawberry Farms, Southern California's first commercial hydroponic urban vertical farm, partners with EnviroIngenuity to promote new production techniques. On Saturday, March 17, 2012, the public will experience the future of farming at the grand opening of Temecula Valley Strawberry Farms, Southern California's first hydroponic vertical strawberry farm. More than 11,250 Verti-Gro "towers" produce large sweet strawberries, using less than 85 percent of the water required in traditional row production.

The Grand Opening celebration is open to the public on Saturday March 17, 2012, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Temecula Valley Strawberry Farms (in Rainbow Valley), located at 5452 5th Street, Fallbrook, CA 92028. Tel (951) 212-5805

Temecula Valley Strawberry Farms is the first commercial strawberry farm in Southern California to employ vertical hydroponic farming, which promises to change agricultural technology. The Fietz's three-acre farm, located in Temecula's Rainbow Valley, would not have been possible due to a lack of water. After drilling their well, they were able to pump just 20 gallons per minute, not nearly enough to grow strawberries commercially.

"An unforeseen water shortage rendered this property unfarmable without vertical hydroponic technology," said Ken Fietz, Sr. "The Verti-Gro equipment is far more cost effective than the competition and uses 85 percent less water than row farming."

Vertical farming methods save space, energy and water resources. Just as important, the berries are picked by the consumers on site, removing fuel and transportation costs.

"People no longer have to visit the Epcot Center to see the future of farming," said Fietz, Sr. "I've been in the strawberry industry for 40 years and water and pesticides have always been huge issues. Add in lots of manual labor and it's tough to make a dime at the end of the day. Since my son, Kenny, was willing to take the reins, I helped him implement this highly efficient system that does away with lots of extra expense and reduces the use of pesticides."

Kenny Fietz, Jr., an agricultural graduate from California State University at Chico, operates the farm with his dad and together they now nurture 45,000 strawberry plants of varying varieties on one acre using the automatic drip system and limited pesticides.

"Because the Verti-Gro system doesn't use soil, there are no issues with soil borne diseases or pests," said Fietz, Jr. "The hydroponic process doesn't require the use of pesticides for these common problems. Energy requirements are also dramatically reduced and harvesting is much easier to perform when you can stand upright instead of stooping over to pick the berries."

Future plans include developing an urban agriculture learning center offering education on growing a wide range of fruits, microgreens and vegetables using advanced hydroponic processes.

“Our vision is for families to come and enjoy a warm day outside, pick strawberries and dip them in chocolate, picnic under the shade trees, enjoy a healthy experience together and even learn about the future of farming,” said Fietz, Sr.

Temecula Valley Strawberry Farms is open seasonally March through August, Thursday through Sunday. Check their website at www.TemeculaValleyStrawberryFarms.com for availability. There is no cost to visit. Visitors will receive a warm hello, a bucket and scissors, a quick education about strawberry harvesting and then be set free to select and harvest their own berries. The U-pick berries are priced at \$3 per pound.

Last month, [EnviroIngenuity](#) announced a [partnership with Verti-Gro®](#) to represent and promote hydroponic vertical farming systems throughout Southern California.

Verti-Gro Inc. designs and manufactures cost-effective, high density hydroponic growing systems. It offers stacked towers to suit large-scale commercial production needs which can be downsized for residential use and Community Supported Agriculture.

About Temecula Valley Strawberry Farms:

The family-owned and operated farm produces strawberries using the highly efficient Verti-Gro hydroponic system. This innovative farming process provides many earth-kind benefits. Their U-pick model offers families the opportunity to pick the freshest, sweetest berries, as well as experience first-hand how they grow. The fun, interactive farm is a great place for the whole family. Whether you come to pick sweet fruit, learn more about farming, enjoy a picnic or grab a few strawberry goodies at their strawberry store, The Fietz family promises you won't be disappointed. Plan your visit at <http://www.TemeculaValleyStrawberryFarms.com> .

About EnviroIngenuity:

EnviroIngenuity was founded in 2009 by Erik Cutter. The company is comprised of forward-thinking professionals, whose goal is to take advantage of the growing demand for more efficient, cost effective sustainable energy solutions, employing solar PV, hi-efficiency LED lighting, green building and vertical food production technologies. EnviroIngenuity's mission is “advancingreenergy” and reducing waste, thus better utilizing limited natural resources. As we invest in a lower carbon future, the EnviroIngenuity team is focused on helping organizations move forward to deploy sustainable energy solutions using disruptive technologies. More information: <http://www.EnviroIngenuity.com> .

News issued by: EnviroIngenuity



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Original Story ID: 2012-03-0305-007 (7724) :: 2012-03-0305-007

Original Keywords: hydroponic vertical strawberry farm, Ken Fietz Sr, EnviroIngenuity, Temecula Valley Strawberry Farms, Verti-Gro Inc, vertical hydroponic farming, pick sweet fruit, Erik Cutter, sustainable energy solutions, u-pick, California agriculture EnviroIngenuity Temecula California TEMECULA, Calif.

Alternate Headline: EnviroIngenuity and Temecula Valley Strawberry Farms partner to promote new food production techniques

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