



AppHarvest Expands Educational Container Farm Program for Eastern Kentucky Students

Rowan County Senior High School students to receive hands-on, high-tech growing experience

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IMAGE/VIDEO GALLERY: Available [here](#)

OCTOBER 13 — MOREHEAD, KENTUCKY — AppHarvest announced today the expansion of its educational high-tech container farm program for Eastern Kentucky students, unveiling a new container farm unit in Rowan County. The program demonstrates the company’s ongoing commitment to fostering interest in high-tech farming, as it seeks to create America’s AgTech capital from within Appalachia.

The retrofitted shipping container will serve as a hands-on agricultural classroom for students at Rowan County Senior High School, allowing them to grow and provide fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables to their classmates and those in need in and around Morehead.

The county is home to AppHarvest’s first controlled environment agriculture facility, a massive 2.76-million-square-foot farm that opens later this month. The facility will employ more than 300 and grow tomatoes to be sold through the top 25 grocers nationwide.

The educational container farm’s arrival will be formally celebrated at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 13, with live music and refreshments, as acclaimed Kentucky muralists Often Seen Rarely Spoken (OSRS) work with the high school’s art students to paint the container farm’s exterior.

Attendees will have the opportunity to tour the container farm and learn about its high-tech tools, as well as see butterhead lettuce starters growing on the container’s vertical columns.

The container farm is 2,880 cubic feet, weighs 7.5 tons and includes space to grow up to 3,600 seedlings and 4,500 mature plants all at once using 256 vertical crop columns. The container’s unique design utilizes cutting-edge LED lighting and closed-loop irrigation systems to allow students to grow far more than traditional open-field agriculture. For instance, they can grow up to 500 full heads of lettuce, or 1,000 miniature heads, as part of a single crop if they desire.

The Rowan County container farm joins AppHarvest’s inaugural container farm serving Shelby Valley High School students in Pike County. Both are part of AppHarvest’s high school AgTech program, which provides Eastern Kentucky students with knowledge about the importance of eating healthy and hands-on experience growing fruits and vegetables in high-tech environments. Students at Shelby Valley High



School have grown leafy greens, donating them to those in need through a backpack program and food pantry.

Guests in attendance will include Rocky Adkins, senior adviser to Gov. Andy Beshear; Rowan County Schools Superintendent John Maxey; Rowan County Judge Executive Harry Clark; Rowan County High School Principal Brandy Carver; and Morehead Mayor Laura White-Brown. All social distancing protocols will be strictly followed, with all in attendance wearing face masks and remaining at least six feet apart while enjoying festivities.

The Rowan County Senior High School container farm program will be led by agriculture teacher Bradley McKinney. The program's curriculum combines existing agricultural education with six new units focusing on leading AgTech advancements. McKinney said the container farm will allow students to be competitive in the national Supervised Agricultural Experience Program, which, along with Future Farmers of America (FFA) and traditional classroom instruction, is an integral part of agriculture education. The program requires students to gain hands-on experience through agriculture-based entrepreneurship, placement programs, or research.

"The container farm is the exact type of hands-on tool that excites students and shows first-hand the excitement of modern farming," McKinney said. "Students can have their own projects and learn all about entrepreneurship, as they make the decisions about what to grow and how to distribute it."

About AppHarvest

AppHarvest is building some of the world's largest indoor farms, combining conventional agricultural techniques with today's technology to grow non-GMO, chemical-free fruits and vegetables to be sold to the top 25 U.S. grocers. The company has developed a unique system to reduce water usage by 90% compared to typical farms, as a 10-acre rainwater retention pond pairs with sophisticated circular irrigation systems. The system also eliminates agricultural runoff entirely. By locating within Appalachia, AppHarvest benefits from being less than a day's drive to 70% of the U.S. population. That lowers diesel use in transportation costs by 80%, allowing the company's fresher produce to compete against low-cost foreign imports.