# CEA Summit East Day 2 Keynote: ‘Beyond Leafy Greens: Lessons from Plenty's Next Chapter’

*Plenty CEO Dan Malech opens the CEA Summit's second day in conversation with Tom Stenzel, Executive Director of the CEA Alliance*

DANVILLE, VA, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Indoor Ag-Con and the CEA Innovation Center today announced the Day 2 keynote for the Fifth Annual Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) Summit East, taking place Sept. 15-16, 2026, at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) in Danville, VA.



CEA Summit Keynote with Plenty CEO Dan Malech and Tom Stenzel, CEA Alliance

The Summit's second morning will open with a fireside chat titled "Beyond Leafy Greens: Lessons from Plenty's Next Chapter," featuring Dan Malech, CEO of Plenty, in conversation with Tom Stenzel, Executive Director of the CEA Alliance. The session takes place Wednesday, Sept. 16, from 8:30 to 9:15 a.m.

> “This conversation will get into the real lessons - what worked, what didn’t, & what it takes to find a sustainable path forward. That’s exactly the kind of insight CEA industry members are seeking.”
>
> *Tom Stenzel, Executive Director, CEA Alliance*

Plenty spent its first decade building a national vertical farming platform anchored in leafy greens. Over the past two years, the company sharpened its focus, moving to a single crop: premium strawberries grown in Virginia. In this conversation, Malech will talk with Stenzel about that evolution — what the leafy greens years taught Plenty about matching technology to market demand, how the company thinks about focus and discipline in a capital-intensive business, and what he'd tell other operators charting their own path to a sustainable model.

“Dan brings a level of candor about what it takes to build a durable business in this industry,” said Tom Stenzel, Executive Director of the CEA Alliance. “This conversation will get into the real lessons — what worked, what didn’t, and what it takes to find a sustainable path forward. That’s exactly the kind of insight CEA industry members are looking for.”




This keynote follows the Summit's opening day keynote on Sept. 15: "Grow It, Then What? Building the Bridge to Market," a fireside chat featuring Kathlyn Terry Baker, CEO of Appalachian Sustainable Development, in conversation with Matthew Lohr, President of VP Strategies LLC and Virginia's former Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry.

The full schedule, speaker roster, networking events, tabletop exhibits and registration are available at www.ceasummit.com. For exhibitor and sponsorship inquiries, contact Suzanne Pruitt at suzanne@indoor.ag or 404.452.1884.

About CEA Summit East
The CEA Summit East is an annual conference bringing greenhouse growers, vertical farm operators, and controlled environment agriculture (CEA) professionals together with researchers, extension professionals, suppliers, and industry leaders. Produced by Indoor Ag-Con and the CEA Innovation Center — a joint project of IALR and the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences — the Summit focuses on the intersection of protected cropping, production science, and emerging technology. Held at IALR in Danville, Va, the event includes keynote presentations, panel discussions, breakout sessions, tabletop exhibits, and guided tours of the CEA Innovation Center's working research facility. For more information, visit www.ceasummit.com

About Indoor Ag-Con
Now in its 14th year, Indoor Ag-Con is the global event for protected ag, greenhouse growing and CEA, connecting growers, suppliers, researchers, and technology leaders across the full agriculture supply chain. Indoor Ag-Con 2027 takes place March 24-25, 2027, at the Westgate Las Vegas. Indoor Ag-Con also presents CEA Summit East, held each fall in Danville, VA, in partnership with the CEA Innovation Center, a joint project with Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and IALR. For more information, visit www.indoor.ag

About the CEA Innovation Center
The CEA Innovation Center is primarily housed in Danville, Virginia, on the IALR campus and in Blacksburg, Virginia, on the Virginia Tech main campus. It is a joint project between the Virginia

Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and IALR to serve the growing controlled environment agriculture industry. It addresses industry needs through research, education, and extension programs. For more information, visit www.ceaic.org

About Plenty
Plenty built a technology platform that can grow fresh produce almost anywhere in the world, year-round, with peak-season quality while using just a fraction of the land compared to outdoor farms. Plenty's proprietary approach is designed to preserve natural resources, make fresh produce available closer to communities, and create resilience in our food systems against weather, location, pests and climate impacts. Plenty operates a vertical farming research center in Laramie, Wyoming, and an advanced indoor strawberry farm near Richmond, Virginia. For more information, visit www.plenty.ag.

About the CEA Alliance
The CEA Alliance is a membership trade association representing and serving high-tech greenhouse producers and indoor farms growing fruits and vegetables in a highly controlled indoor production environment. For more information, visit www.ceaalliance.com

Suzanne Pruitt
Indoor Ag-Con
+1 404-452-1884
email us here
Visit us on social media:
LinkedIn
Instagram
Facebook
X

This press release can be viewed online at: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/939382066

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.
© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.