



South Carolina
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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High Tech Farming Coming to Hampton County
\$314 Million Agriculture Technology Campus A Big Win for Local Food in SC

COLUMBIA – A 1,000-acre agribusiness cluster in Hampton County will employ 1,547 people in growing, packing and shipping tomatoes, leafy greens, blueberries and other fresh produce – using a cutting-edge approach called Controlled Environment Agriculture.

The \$314 million Agriculture Technology Campus is a joint venture encompassing multiple greenhouses and hoop-houses, a 150,000-square-foot distribution center, and a large co-packer centrally located within the cluster, which is situated near I-95.

The project brings together several powerhouse agribusinesses – Mastronardi, a Canadian company that sells tomatoes under the Sunset label; LiDestri Food and Drink, which will provide processing, packing, shipping and logistical services; and Clear Water Farms, an experienced indoor grower of leafy greens – along with GEM Opportunity Zone Fund.

Controlled Environment Agriculture is a technology-based approach to indoor farming that allows growers to minimize space and conserve water while controlling for factors like weather.

For the past three years, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture has been exploring the potential for Controlled Environment Agriculture to boost the state’s agricultural economy, not only providing new jobs but offering opportunities for existing South Carolina farmers as agribusiness operations build a local supply chain. Growing and sourcing locally grown foods helps ensure food supply chain security, a need amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, and minimizes operating expenses through co-location.

The Agriculture Technology Campus cluster is projected to increase total economic output in Hampton County by \$551.7 million a year, or \$7.4 billion over 15 years, according to an economic impact study commissioned by the Department. The campus is expected to be operational in 2022.

“The Agriculture Technology Campus investment in South Carolina agriculture is transformative, creating jobs in the Hampton County region and future opportunities for South Carolina farmers,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. “A Controlled Environment Agriculture project of this scale will conserve land and water and offer South Carolinians more chances to buy local produce.”

“This is a historic day for a region steeped in agricultural history,” said GEM Opportunity Zone Fund CEO Zeb Portanova. “I am thrilled to be part of this innovative group looking to grow high quality agriculture across the region. We will deploy sustainable practices such as using recycled rainwater to irrigate our greenhouses while also providing all Carolina farmers access to our state-of-the-art co-packing facility. This will help pave the way for citizens to visit their local grocery stores, where they will be able to purchase pesticide-free, locally grown produce.”

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