



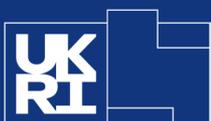
Food
NORTH-WEST

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TIPS FOR NEW ENTRANTS CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT AGRICULTURE

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Innovate UK
KTN

Advice from Stakeholders

- ✓ **Attend trade shows in-person**
Valuable for learning about new developments in supplementary technology.
- ✓ **Be patient**
It takes time to troubleshoot and optimise new production systems. If it doesn't work in the first growth cycle, it isn't necessarily a sign to give up.
- ✓ **Build a CEA network**
LinkedIn is an easy and effective route to meeting others in the sector.
- ✓ **Carve out your niche**
Find out what species other people are producing and maybe think outside the box. Variety and new products are needed – although this can be more difficult, as the markets may be small at first.
- ✓ **Expertise**
Many start-ups fail because they underestimate the depth and breadth of expertise required.
- ✓ **Government grants** (e.g. via Innovate UK) can be a useful mechanism for technology providers to access finance and collaborate with research organisations.
- ✓ **Have a clear strategy and plan**
When starting out, it is important to ask yourself a number of key questions: Do you want to operate a facility, lease out a building to a third party to operate, or develop new technology? What do you want to grow? Are you looking to produce white label or branded goods? Who is your target customer?
- ✓ **Renewable energy sources**
CEA systems require significant energy; in the planning phase make sure to look at available renewable energy sources and the grid map as well.
- ✓ **Seek partners and funding**
For UK organisations, [Innovate UK KTN](#) can help you find partners and funding for your project. [↗](#)
- ✓ **Sourcing CEA specific inputs**
While some inputs (e.g. seeds, fertilisers) can be sourced from suppliers that cater to conventional growers, sourcing CEA-specific inputs such as growth media can be difficult and expensive. Factor this into timelines and budgets, and seek guidance from networks / peers.
- ✓ **Thorough and sound financial modelling**
It is easy to conceptually oversimplify what CEA entails.
- ✓ **Understand auditing rules**
Retailers all have their own auditing requirements which tend to be quite strict and are typically not designed for vertical farming production, yet CEA producers must still comply. Seeking guidance early on regarding these rules (e.g. via collaborations or conversations with stakeholders familiar with the requirements) can be invaluable in navigating these issues. Similarly, hiring a technical expert early on who is familiar with retailer standards and how to implement the necessary processes may be a useful investment.
- ✓ **Use available support**
For UK organisations, [Innovate UK Edge](#) can work with you to identify an effective business strategy. [↗](#)

Explore recommended websites for further support including [AgFunder](#), [HortiDaily](#) and [Vertical Farm Daily](#) [↗](#)

Funding Opportunities

Iceland:

- [The Icelandic Centre for Research](#) 

Ireland:

- [Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Grants & Funding](#) 

UK:

- [Farming Innovation Programme](#) 
- [Innovate UK Innovation Funding](#) 
- [Innovate UK KTN AgriFood Newsletter](#) 
- [Rural Payments & Grants](#) 

Support for New Producers

- [Matís' Information for new food producers](#) 
- [UKUAT Controlled Environment Agriculture Rough Starter Guide](#) 
- [Intelligent Growth Solutions' Vertical Farming Buyers' Guide Series](#) 
 - How to meet your vertical farm's market demand
 - Commercial viability for vertical farms
 - Optimise plant growth with vertical farming

Resources Needed

- A guide for newcomers covering the basics of how to operate a vertical farm to inform about complexity of set-up, required expertise, operations, etc.
- A suppliers database tailored to the CEA sector would be a valuable resource that does not seem to currently exist, as identifying suppliers for inputs unique to CEA systems can be difficult and time-consuming.
- A network for rural CEA / vertical farm operators could be a useful mechanism for peer-to-peer learning and help address existing barriers to rural deployment.
- Financing for operators. Both private investment and grant funding opportunities largely target technology providers as opposed to producers, who may struggle to access necessary capital.

Sources

The information provided was compiled following consultations with established CEA stakeholders from Iceland, Ireland and the United Kingdom.



For a description of the consultation methodology and a list of contributors, please see the '[Controlled Environment Agriculture in North-West Europe](#)' report. 

For further information about this consultation, please contact:

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About EIT Food

EIT Food is the world's largest and most dynamic food innovation community. We accelerate innovation to build a future-fit food system that produces healthy and sustainable food for all.

Supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, we invest in projects, organisations and individuals that share our goals for a healthy and sustainable food system. We unlock innovation potential in businesses and universities, and create and scale agrifood startups to bring new technologies and products to market. We equip entrepreneurs and professionals with the skills needed to transform the food system and put consumers at the heart of our work, helping build trust by reconnecting them to the origins of their food.

We are one of nine innovation communities established by the European Institute for Innovation & Technology (EIT), an independent EU body set up in 2008 to drive innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe.

Find out more at www.eitfood.eu

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ideas, people and communities to drive
innovation with a positive change in sight.
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