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CABNR: The College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources
Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station
www.cabnr.unr.edu

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University of Nevada Board of Regents approves land lease on first commercial aeroponic greenhouse in the United States

Collaboration with CABNR may lead to development of new local industry

RENO, Nev. – At a recent meeting, the University of Nevada Board of Regents approved a lease with NewGardens LLC, a Nevada corporation that is proposing to build the first commercial-size aeroponic greenhouse in the United States at Reno's Valley Road Field Laboratory. The Field Lab is operated by the Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station, the research arm of the University of Nevada, Reno's College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources.

The company proposes to grow and market high quality, rare organic Italian tomatoes and other freshly harvested vegetables to local high-end restaurants and spas with "just in time" deliveries the same day of harvest.

"This is a strategic partnership that will match CABNR's research abilities with the potential development of a new industry for northern Nevada," said Ron Pardini, associate director of the NAES. "Locating an aeroponic greenhouse at our Valley Road Field Lab will enable CABNR to include this new technology in our academic programs, and it could ultimately have a significant economic impact on the region."

Simply put, "aeroponics" is growing food in air. A computerized misting system — turned on for only a few seconds every two to three minutes — sprays a fine mist of nutrient solution over the roots, which are suspended in midair and enclosed in a spraying box. The box is sealed so the roots are enclosed in darkness to inhibit algae growth, plus the resulting high levels of oxygen and saturation humidity help nourish the plant. Water and nutrients are supplied from a 50-liter, closed-loop irrigation system and are delivered by a microprocessor and custom-designed software, minimizing water waste.

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"Our collaboration with CABNR and the University of Nevada, Reno will help us develop a profitable business as the first major commercial aeroponic company in the Americas," said NewGardens principal Bill Sobolewski. "Reno is the perfect location as it gets lots of sun, has strong governmental support for business and is a highly visible destination."

The aeroponic greenhouse is proposed to be built adjacent to the six new, state-of-the-art academic research and teaching greenhouses currently under construction at Valley Road. The agreement approved by the Board of Regents provides for CABNR student internships at the new facility as well as opportunities for NAES faculty to conduct research on commercial aeroponic vegetable production in Nevada.

"This partnership will provide CABNR students with the first hands-on educational experiences in commercial aeroponics in the U.S.," Pardini said. "These practical student learning experiences will give our graduates a competitive edge in directing the future of agricultural production."

After construction is complete, NewGardens will relocate its company headquarters from Beaverton, Ore. to office space located adjacent to the greenhouse at the Valley Road Field Laboratory.

Interested investors also are invited to visit NewGardens' Web site at www.newgardensllc.com and contact the company for more information.

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The **College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources** is a founding college of the University of Nevada, Reno. The college, along with the federally established **Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station**, offers pioneering research and education in biotechnology, molecular biology, natural resource management, agricultural production, economic development, human/animal health and nutrition and environmental science.