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Sky vegetables could change world food business

28 04 2008

By GEOFF WILSON

Building and operating commercial greenhouses on supermarket rooftops in the United States is the award-winning idea for a new business named [Sky Vegetables](#).

It is an idea expected to be widely adopted around the world as peak oil cost increases and climate change problems seriously challenge traditional agricultural production.

Last month the Sky Vegetables' business plan won the \$10,000 top prize in the 2008 G.Steven Burrill Business Plan Competition for students of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

According to the Wisconsin Technology Network News, Sky Vegetables won top prize following a review of business plans of 17 start-up companies.

Sky Vegetables prototype green roof investment intends to break even 20 months from now. It proposes to operate its rooftop greenhouses as separate entities above supermarkets and its business model calls for year-round rooftop hydroponic cultivation of vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers for retail sale immediately below. Fast expansion of the idea is expected as Sky Vegetables succeeds.

Produce will be picked as it ripens, and taken to the sales shelf in less than half an hour. Market research has shown this as a big sales clincher.

Lack of transportation, packaging, and storage costs provides the venture with a significant competitive advantage. About 80% of the cost of fresh produce in the U.S lies in the travel from farm to supermarket shelf. Other developed countries have much the same cost basis for fresh produce.

Up until now the lower farm cost of most agricultural production has prevented this rooftop urban agriculture idea from being maintained, but as rural production faces declines from climate change problems ahead, and

as petroleum cost rises add to rural production, transport and other costs, the rooftop growing above supermarkets becomes financially attractive.

Since 1966 the Burrill competition has encouraged UW-Madison students to design technology-related businesses. G. Steven Burrill, the UW alumnus who supports the competition is a San Franciscan merchant banker investing in biotechnology companies. He is known internationally for his interest in life sciences.

The Sky Vegetables rooftop investment is expected to have significant benefits in Australia, via Green Roofs Australia Inc.

More details of United States and Australian “food from the roof” projects will be available for participants in the second annual Green Roofs Australia conference in Brisbane, Queensland, on June 18 and 19. [Details here.](#)





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7 responses to “Sky vegetables could change world food business”

2 05 2008



[Stephen Lark](#) (00:44:34) :

The photos on this URL (<http://greenroofs.wordpress.com/2008/04/28/sky-vegetables-could-change-world-food-business/>) are, to use the technical term, rooted. Specifically supermarket-with-greenhouse-no-label1.jpg which has actual dimensions of 2487px x 1141px and vegetable-stand.jpg which has actual dimensions of 2708px x 2000px are both WAY too large for this web page, where the specified

dimensions for both .jpgs are ~1/4 the actual dimensions (422px x 193px for supermarket-with-greenhouse-no-label1.jpg and 492px x 397px for vegetable-stand.jpg).

Please fix this problem webmaster.

9 05 2008



snailing (04:47:57) :

Hey, I am living in Yogya and I work for a group that provides environmental education to children throughout the city.

Yesturday I spoke with a group of people who want to make a roof top garden for a primary school. Do you have any suggestions or are there resources here that we might be able to use so as not to have to reinvent the wheel?

(I actually only speak indonesian but my friend from australia is translating for me.)

Thankyou,
Mas Kendal.

6 06 2008



tseo (03:32:31) :

The foods have nutrients or healthy foods are comes from the farms. Even the riches people still got foods from the farms, and they bought the large farms for their own. The purpose of this topic is to protect the farms like rice and corn, fruits and also water we need that. Even if we only have rice, fruits and water we still healthy.

- Jeramel Mingueto -
<http://ichatagriculture.com>

19 06 2008



Peduncle (06:35:12) :

Somehow i missed the point. Probably lost in translation 😊 Anyway ... nice blog to visit.

cheers, Peduncle.

12 08 2008



Heidi (21:16:53) :

Hello, I own an organic cafe near boston and as we plan to expand, I've envisioned building passive solar greenhouses in the city so that we can purchase our food directly from there instead of getting it from California. How much produce can be produced from a roof greenhouse? If sky vegetable has done this, how big was it and what was the cost of the initial build? Who is growing and harvesting? Is there a contact person for them?

Thanks!

4 10 2008



[istgah](#) (09:12:05) :

very nice and interesting
tankx !

27 10 2008



[cheritycall](#) (11:08:19) :

Hi, Do something to help the hungry people in Africa and India,
I created this blog about that subject:
in <http://tinyurl.com/6kv7fu>

Leave a comment

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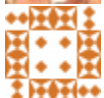
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