



October 25 - 26, 2022
IALR Institute Conference Center - Danville, VA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact: Suzanne Pruitt
404.452.1884 | suzanne@indoor.ag

**VIRGINIA SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY MATTHEW LOHR TO
LEAD KEYNOTE AT CEA SUMMIT EAST 2022**

DANVILLE, VA (SEPTEMBER 26, 2022) – Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matthew Lohr will lead the CEA Summit East Day Two Keynote, *“Reorienting Our Fresh Produce Supply Chain: Behind Virginia’s Push to Become A National Indoor Farming Industry Leader,”* on Wednesday, October 26, 2022 at 9 am. Indoor Ag-Con and the Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) Innovation Center -- a joint project of the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences at Virginia Tech, Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center at Virginia Tech, and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) – have partnered to co-host the new event from October 25-26, 2022 at the IALR Institute Conference Center in Danville, VA.

Secretary Lohr joins the CEA Summit East headliner keynote line-up, which also includes the opening morning kick-off session with AeroFarms CTO Roger Buelow on Tuesday, October 25.

During his keynote, Secretary Lohr will share insights into Virginia’s vision for the future of fresh produce and how he and his team are working with industry partners to achieve it.

“Rising transportation costs and droughts in the western United States will mean East Coast states like Virginia must reorient our supply chain for fresh produce to more local suppliers,” said Lohr during the recent Grand Opening of AeroFarms Danville, the world’s largest aeroponic smart farm.



Matthew Lohr
Virginia Secretary of
Agriculture & Forestry

*Reorienting Our Fresh Produce
Supply Chain:
Behind Virginia's Push to
Become A National Indoor
Farming Industry Leader*



KEYNOTE

 **OCTOBER 26, 2022 | 9 AM ET**

 **WWW.CEASUMMIT.COM**

"While painful, this situation also creates an important opportunity for the Commonwealth to become a national leader in the fast-growing indoor farming industry. Continued success in recruiting and supporting the growth of these companies can bring economic opportunity to all corners of the Commonwealth, while also supplying fresh, safe, and sustainable food to our citizens and neighbors," he added.

Matthew Lohr was raised on a Virginia century family farm in the Shenandoah Valley. As a fifth-generation farmer, he has spent his entire life working for the betterment of the agricultural industry and rural America.

He developed his passion for public service and agricultural policy while serving as both a state and national FFA officer before graduating from Virginia Tech with a B.S. degree in Agricultural Education. He has more than 30 years of experience as a professional leader and communicator.

Over the past two years, he has served as the Chief of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, an agency with more than 10,000 employees across 3,000 field offices and an operating budget of over \$4.5 billion.

"We are honored to have Secretary Lohr join us for the inaugural edition of the CEA Summit East," says Dr. Michael Evans, Director of the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences at Virginia Tech and Associate Director of the CEA Innovation Center. "Virginia is deeply committed to promoting and advancing the CEA sector and the work we're doing offers ideas, examples and exciting growth opportunities that extend far beyond our state borders. This promises to be an inspiring session for all our attendees."

The new CEA Summit East is custom-tailored for new and well-seasoned CEA industry members from throughout the Eastern US, including indoor and greenhouse growers, facility owners and operators, educators, government officials, real estate developers, architects, construction specialists, sales and marketing teams and others.

During the one and one-half day event, industry members will have the opportunity to attend the **conference** featuring CEA thought leaders, researchers and experts leading keynotes, panels, and breakout sessions; explore **tabletop exhibits** presenting the latest CEA innovations and services; and enjoy a host of **networking opportunities** ranging from meals and coffee breaks to an evening social event.

Registration is now open for the event and attendees can save with discounted Early Bird rates when they register before October 7, 2022. Learn more at www.ceasummit.com

QUICK FACTS:

WHEN: Tuesday, October 25 – Wednesday, October 26, 2022
WHERE: IALR Institute Conference Center, 150 Slayton Ave, Danville, VA 24540
INFO: For information on exhibiting or attending visit www.ceasummit.com

ABOUT INDOOR AG-CON

Founded in 2013, **Indoor Ag-Con** has emerged as the premier trade event for indoor | vertical farming | controlled environment agriculture, the practice of growing crops in indoor systems, using hydroponic, aquaponic and aeroponic techniques. Its events are crop-agnostic and touch all sectors of the business,

covering produce, legal cannabis | hemp, alternate protein and non-food crops. More information
– www.indoor.ag | 404.991.5186

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF PLANT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES AT VIRGINIA TECH

The School of Plant and Environmental Sciences at Virginia Tech trains the next generation of professionals in the fields of plant breeding and genetics, agronomic and horticultural crop production, plant protection, soil and water systems management, agricultural technologies, environmental restoration and agro-environmental stewardship. It conducts research to improve agricultural productivity, reduce negative impacts on the environment and improve soil and water health. Through extension programs, it provides science-based information to stakeholders to help them feed the world while protecting the environment. More information — www.spes.vt.edu

ABOUT THE VIRGINIA SEAFOOD AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER AT VIRGINIA TECH

The Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center at Virginia Tech works to support the future of the historic seafood industry — in Virginia and beyond. Its extension specialists work with industry and research partners to identify and respond to emerging needs and provide technical guidance to stakeholders in every level of the seafood supply chain. Through technical assistance, training, process validation, value-added product development, and more, it helps stakeholders ensure product quality, safety, and viability. More information -- www.arec.vaes.vt.edu

ABOUT IALR

The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) serves as a regional catalyst for economic transformation. Core focus areas include research that provides a clear path to commercialization, advanced learning opportunities where education meets experience, training and rapid-launch space for advanced manufacturers, and economic development through conferencing and a partnership with the Southern Virginia Regional Alliance. It is located in scenic and historic Danville-Pittsylvania County on the VA/NC state line, within a short drive of Roanoke, Greensboro and Raleigh. More information
– www.ialr.org