Could indoor ‘freight farms’ provide ideal growing conditions for CRISPR-edited crops?

The technology and innovation moving within modern day agriculture is so fast-paced and expansive, you can find futuristic solutions, ideas, and research sprouting in some pretty unlikely places. Among the most unsuspecting would be full-scale commercial farming and research happening inside what looks like a shipping container.

Enter Freight Farms, a company founded in 2010 and known for their hydroponic vertical container farms used to grow a variety of fresh crops virtually anywhere in the world. Recently, Freight Farms partnered with Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory to explore the integration of CRISPR tomato seed genetics in a climate-controlled vertical farm setting. The trials were conducted by Dr. Zach Lippman, who is engineering a wider variety of tomato crops capable of being grown successfully and commercially in the Freight Farms-style vertical systems.

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Using the container’s environmental controls, the research was able to fully capitalize on the unique characteristics of the gene-edited tomato seeds by creating optimal growing conditions …. The end result was a new crop structure of small, compactly bunched tomatoes ready for harvest in less than 40 days. [I]t …. directs most of the plant’s energy into making and ripening fruit instead of inefficient growth spent on vine structure.

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