

## New LED Lights Boost Greenhouse Production

Spectra Blade LED lighting from Intravision can boost the quality and quantity of indoor vegetable production. The lights are available in multiple lengths, spectrums and styles. They can be adjusted from 0 to 100 or 0 to 200 watts, can be passively or water-cooled, and can be adjusted in size from 4 to 12 pixels. The also come in single or double-sided models.

“Our lights are being used in greenhouses, as well as in vertical farming and other controlled environments,” says Josh Siteman, Intravision. “We design turnkey systems tailored for specific plants and production facilities.”

The basic research for the LED’s is carried out in Norway, where company founder and CEO Per Aage Lysaa has been studying the impact of narrow bandwidth light on living organisms since 2000. The company’s LED systems offer up to 5 times the light intensity of the sun in a compact

space.

The company focuses on light spectrum quality that produces the best results for growers. Light recipes are developed in cooperation with the Controlled Environments Systems Research Facility at the University of Guelph in Canada.

“We know that plants have evolved under full spectrum light and that red and blue spectrum lights are the primary drivers of photosynthesis,” says Siteman. “Isolating the reds and blues conserves energy and allows leafy green crops to excel.”

Tomatoes and strawberries require more complex systems, including ultra violet and infrared spectrums.

Red light impacts quantity, making larger plants, while blue can affect taste, color and nutritional value. Founder Lysaa says LEDs have the potential to change taste and nutritional values based on the color combinations and intensity selected.



**SpectraBlade LED lights are being used in greenhouses and other controlled environments to boost the quality and quantity of indoor vegetable production.**

The slim profile Spectra Blades range in length from 5-ft., 3-in. long to 7-ft., 10-in. While prices vary depending on options, a standard 6-ft., 10-in. light with digital drivers is priced at \$550. A 5-ft., 3-in. single side, dimmable unit is priced at \$280.

Spectra Blades are available direct from the company, by themselves or as part of a structural design. In Canada, they are also distributed by Modular Farms ([www.modularfarms.co](http://www.modularfarms.co)) as lighting units by

themselves. Modular Farms also markets a turnkey containerized vertical farm using Spectra Blades. Those units were designed and produced under Intravision supervision.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Intravision Light Systems Inc., 3723 Mountainview Rd., Beamsville, Ont. Canada LOR 1B2 (ph 289 400-7084; [josh@intravision.ca](mailto:josh@intravision.ca); [www.intravision.ca](http://www.intravision.ca)).

## Sharpening Business Pays Off In Retirement

“I needed an easier line of work in retirement, so sharpening clipper blades (for grooming livestock) and cutting tools seemed like a nice business opportunity,” says Tom Reid of Poynette, Wis.

Reid says the company he bought his sharpening equipment from ([www.theedgepro.com](http://www.theedgepro.com); ph 866 963-1990) taught him sharpening techniques during a 2-day class, which was really important. “The sharpening wheel is made of cast aluminum and is porous. It’s especially made for clipper blades, so it’s very sensitive. I learned real quick that it’s important to sharpen the blades at the correct angle and with the right amount of tension. A person has to watch the spark pattern to determine when a blade is sharp.”

Before Reid sharpens each set of blades he cleans all the parts, including the tension spring and the top screws. He uses a steel brush or a wheel to clean rust or dirt from the blades. After sharpening, he dips them in a special cleaner, de-magnetizes them to remove any metal particles, blow dries each one and then tests them on his own clipper.

“In addition to the sharpening wheel, one tool sets the tension spring so it works

correctly and another tool measures the pressure of the spring. Some people try to sharpen their own blades, but find out real quick that there’s a lot to it,” notes Reid.

He says customers have told him that their freshly sharpened blades are better than new ones. Veterinarians go through a lot of blades because they’re often shaving animals with a dirty hair coat to perform a surgery. “Dirty hair is the hardest on clipper blades and can dull them after just a portion of one animal,” Reid says.

“I’m a small business so I’m able to provide personalized, professional service,” Reid says. “I’m the one who’s doing the work, so it’s going to get done right, and the blades will get back to my customers exactly when they need them at a price they can afford.”

Reid has built a steady following of customers by attending livestock shows and maintaining a Facebook page. He says the importance of grooming show animals is one of the big reasons there’s a need for a service like his. “Blades and clipping equipment must be extremely sharp to do a perfect job on show animals. If there’s a tiny jagged edge on a scissors or a nick on any part of a clipper



**Tom Reid needed an easier line of work in retirement, so he started a business sharpening clipper blades for grooming livestock.**

blade, it’s going to damage the hair coat or leave an uneven mark that could result in a lower score from the judges,” says Reid. “I can sharpen cutting tools and clipper blades several times for the cost of buying new ones.”

Customers from across the country are sending several types of clipper blades to Reid because he cleans, refurbishes and sharpens them for just \$6 a set. The customers

pay shipping both ways, which still brings the cost to less than new blades, which can run \$30 to \$45 each.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hidden Spring Sharpening, W 5579 County Road CS, Poynette, Wis. 53955 (ph 608 516-2288; [j.hiddenspringranch@gmail.com](mailto:j.hiddenspringranch@gmail.com)).

## They Rent Out Backyard Chickens, Coops

Folks on the fence about committing to owning backyard chickens near Rochester, Minn., have the option of renting two hens and a coop from a new business, Our Backyard Chicken LLC.

After raising chickens for a few years and hearing comments from interested family and friends, Tim and Julie Johnson decided to start a rental business.

In 2015 they rented out their first units: 4-by 6-ft. coops on wheels with handles to move easily, two Red Star hens, 50 lbs. of feed, a bale of pine shavings for bedding, water and feed containers, and a lesson on how to care for chickens. They offer two options: monthly rental for \$125 or seasonal rental for \$375 from May/June to the beginning of November.

“This year business has really grown, and we’re doing our best to build coops to keep

up with demand,” says Julie Johnson. “It’s a mixture of families with kids and couples who want to have chickens and maybe grew up on farms.”

Besides the interest in knowing where their food comes from, having chickens helps educate children, customers tell them.

Half of the hen renters live outside on a few acres. Customers within city limits purchase a \$20 permit from the city good for two years.

The response has been interesting, Johnson notes. After renting last year, one family decided to build their own coop. Another liked the seasonal rental and asked to get the same hens back in 2016.

The Johnsons selected the Red Star breed because they are reliable and easy to care for. The hens are 7 to 9 months old and if they die of natural causes, the Johnsons replace them. If the renter is responsible for the

death – such as their dog killing the chicken –replacement cost is \$25. So far there have been no problems with wildlife predators. Customers are mindful about protecting their birds, and the Johnsons are always available to answer questions by phone or through email.

“We get feedback through their chicken stories. They are so excited about getting their fresh eggs. The chickens are spoiled and tame when we pick them up at the end of the season,” Johnson says.

Customers can purchase the hens for \$20, but they must build their own coops. The rental coops are not insulated for winter.

The business has been rewarding, Johnson says, as customers learn about chickens and realize how good fresh eggs taste.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tim and Julie Johnson, Our Backyard Chicken



**Tim and Julie Johnson rent out chickens with a 4 by 6-ft. coop on wheels, for \$375 per season.**

LLC, Rochester, Minn. (ph 507 319-4894 or 507 281-1716; [ourbackyardchicken@gmail.com](mailto:ourbackyardchicken@gmail.com)).