



Due to the coronavirus pandemic, vast swathes of city centre real estate lies empty | Photo source [Oliver Hale](#) on Unsplash

[Innovation](#) > [Agriculture & Energy](#) > [Disused office space becomes smart vertical farm](#)

## DISUSED OFFICE SPACE BECOMES SMART VERTICAL FARM

 AGRICULTURE & ENERGY

### An AI growing platform makes use of empty office spaces through commercially scaled vertical farming

**Spotted:** Finnish ag-tech company iFarm has created a service platform named Growtune for smart, remote management of vertical farms. As countries grapple with the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, vast swathes of city centre real estate lie empty and may continue to do so for months and years to come. Growtune brings literal life to the empty spaces through commercially scaled vertical farming. Urban dwellers now have access to fresh produce grown within walking distance of their front door.

Growtune helps urban farmers manage every aspect of their work, from choosing which crops to grow to planning harvest schedules across multiple sites. The platform remotely manages myriad variables crucial to the success of the crop, from indoor microclimate to lighting and nutrient schedules and early detection of disease. The range of predators and weather challenges that are eliminated through indoor vertical farming is vast. Farmers using the platform increase their financial and physical yields by saving time and energy that used to be spent on machinery maintenance, staff management and pest control.

The iFarm team currently seeks expressions of interest from anyone wanting to start an urban vertical farm. The company actively promotes networks of sustainable food-related businesses and provides support in a range of ways, from technology solutions to investment and retail opportunities.

Finding ways to reduce food waste and spoilage is an essential part of feeding the world's population. Recent innovations in these areas spotted by Springwise include [solar-powered](#)

refrigerators for improved food storage facilities and a new technology that allows cooked food to be stored at room temperature.

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### **Takeaway:**

The efficiencies built into many of the recent ag-tech innovations are substantial, often combining ecological benefits with community benefits. Urban vertical farming reduces the volumes of required resources at the same time as reducing delivery times and cost. Food insecurity remains a global threat that has been exacerbated by recent events, so industrial-scale growing options that bring with them hyper-local benefits could provide myriad improvements, including kickstarting circular economies and increasing the numbers of carbon-neutral neighbourhoods.