
EKFC invests in world's largest vertical farm

By **Rachel Debling** on June, 29 2018 | Catering



Saeed Mohammed, CEO of Emirates Flight Catering (left), and Sonia Lo, CEO of Crop One Holdings (right), following the signing of their joint venture agreement

[Emirates Flight Catering](#) (EKFC) and U.S.-based [Crop One Holdings](#) have announced a US\$40 million joint venture to build the world's largest vertical farming facility near Al Maktoum International Airport at Dubai World Central.

Construction of the facility is slated to begin in November and will continue for approximately one year at which time, in December 2019, the first products are expected to be delivered to EKFC's customers, including 105 airlines and 25 airport lounges.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline and Group said in a statement from the company: "Today's announcement is an important milestone for the Emirates Group, for Dubai, and for the UAE. This investment to build and operate the world's largest vertical farming facility aligns with the UAE's drive for more agricultural self-sufficiency, a vision which began with the late HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the UAE's founding father. The introduction of ground-breaking technology at the facility also enhances Dubai's position as a global innovation hub.

Saeed Mohammed, Chief Executive Officer of Emirates Flight Catering, also commented: "As one of the world's largest airline catering operations, Emirates Flight Catering constantly looks at innovation, and ways to improve our productivity, product and service quality. Introducing the latest technology to our operations, we secure our own supply chain of high quality and locally-sourced fresh vegetables, while significantly reducing our environmental footprint. We are pleased to partner with Crop One, the industry's leading grower, packer and distributor, and a successful company that shares our corporate values. Together we look forward to delivering a best-in-class product and excellent value to our customers and stakeholders."

"Our proven business model has demonstrated profitable commercial production longer than any other major vertical farmer," said Sonia Lo, Chief Executive Officer of Crop One Holdings. "We are farmers using the most sophisticated plant science and proven business efficiencies to provide market leading consumer products every day. Our selection after a 10-month search by EKFC is a validation of our successful business model that uses patented technology and processes to optimize crop yields and facilitate hyper-growth."

The vertical farm facility will have a production output equivalent to 900 acres of farmland yet will only take up 130,000 square feet. According to estimates from EKFC, the facility will harvest three US tons (2,700 kg) of high-quality, herbicide-free and pesticide-free leafy greens daily once it reaches full production while using 99% less water than traditional outdoor fields. As the farm is close to the point of consumption, carbon emissions associated with transportation will also be drastically reduced and will lead to quick delivery of fresh produce to customers.