



# e-GRO Alert

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## A Mid-Season Punch-List

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As an Extension Specialist in Georgia, I have the opportunity to witness crop growth and the issues that may arise in a greenhouse a few weeks earlier than the majority of the US. What we are seeing right now in Georgia and nearby states is that growers and owners are so busy dealing with other daily matters that one or more production items are being overlooked, or ignored.... and need to be addressed. This is especially true in family-run operations under 3 acres of production doing multiple turns.

Remember, crop shrinkage is a profit killer. A simple 1% increase in total crop sales can equate to a 24% increase in your end-of-year profit margin. In reverse, shrinkage affects your profit margin similarly. The causes of the shrinkage effect really kick in mid-crop when we tend to get busy and let things go we'd otherwise handle. In most cases, this crop loss is easily reduced if addressed.

So let's do a quick, 1/2 day assessment. Don't have time as the owner? The very best way to deal with this is to delegate the punch-out list to one employee and set him or her into the greenhouse for a few hours. Assign them to report back to you with this checklist in writing.... and ask them to come up with ideas to address

the discovered issues before they report to you. You could give the list to all your various supervisors if you run a large operation, but it always works better, and is more efficient if you have one person empowered to report undertake this.

Don't think you have issues? In a recent test of this punch-out list on a location that has an excellent reputation for product and service, we found 7 items that were serious and needed addressing, much to the surprise of the owner. Each listed issue affects crop quality, crop number or the ability of your company to deliver the crop as promised. Delegate the assignment, read the report, take action to remedy the deficiencies and then sleep well knowing you have reviewed your facility and reacted to potential problems before they reduced your profit margin.

### Things to bring:

1. Note Pad. E-gro form, Pen,
2. Camera (Be sure to log pictures on pad too)
3. Water sample container
4. Soil sample bags
5. Small plastic bags for pest samples.



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This image was taken at 3:00 pm! Condensate happens, yes, but proper ventilation and irrigation should minimize its presence.



Grower got busy planting "Turn 2" .... A proper scouting program would have caught this pH problem a week before the first signs.



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## Mid Crop Punch List

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Check your crop growth rates:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Which crops are behind schedule, or ahead of schedule? Make a list!
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Do you have a working plan for controlling stretch or rapid growth?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Check your greenhouse condensate level:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Is it persistent through the morning hours?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Do you have algae build up on end walls, and lower surfaces of benches?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Scout your entire crop in detail:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Reinstall or replaced sticky cards. Are they being checked daily?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Canvassed the crops for disease/deficiency symptoms using a sweep effort.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Are you rotating your pesticides in a carefully planned program?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Check water supply pH and Alkalinity
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Have you sent in a water supply test for Alkalinity / pH
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Do you know the pH of your water supply at the hose at fertilization?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Check soil pH
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Performed a pour-thru pH EC test
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Sent soil samples in to verify pH, EC
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Do you have fertilizer or water-amending products on hand to adjust pH?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Scout your irrigation program
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Is your hand-watering or irrigation pattern missing edges/corners? Flag them!
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Are you or your employees watering excessively? Shore flies? Fungus gnats?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Is hanging basket drip causing problems in areas?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Check your plant spacing:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Are individually potted crops now too close together?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Are your HAF fans running 24/7 to increase evaporation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Are you ready for shipping?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Is your shipping bay clean and organized?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Are your trucks/skid-loaders working and ready for road inspections?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Do you have sufficient carts in place for shipping?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Do a quick greenhouse sanitation assessment:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Hoses not on floor, not kinked, and covered trash cans available.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Employees washing hands before handling crops?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Greenhouse aisles clean, cleared of materials & no weeds under benches?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Check your structure, especially poly houses.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Are you ready for Spring wind? Did snow-load loosen your poly? Small tears?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. If you use shade cloth, is it ready? Have you checked for needed repairs?