Vertical growing farms using closed-loop systems to produce herbs, green vegetables and fish. FarmedHere uses urban-situated closed facilities, keeping out the pests, diseases, and weather that impact most produce today. FarmedHere has one location currently, with plans to build 18 more farms. The produce is USDA Organic Certified and uses an aquaponic operation with up to 95% less water than traditional farming. FarmedHere only uses suppliers within a 200 mile radius to reduce carbon-footprint.

“We hire local people. We sell to local vendors. We do our own packaging here. We don’t use outside distributors because we have full quality control when we make deliveries ourselves. And people around here are really responding. Part of this food revolution means educating vendors, consumers and trade partners” says CEO Matt Matros. “We figured out how to sell it first. We wanted to be marketers first and then we’ll be growers second. That’s what we’ve been doing. We created a business and the technology we have supports the marketing, as opposed to the other way around.”

KEY ELEMENTS:

- **MISSION:** FarmedHere’s mission is to transform the way local and organic produce is grown and distributed, making it accessible to everyone by profitably growing high quality vegetables indoors, year round, which are distributed to retail partners within 24 hours of harvest.
- **TECHNICAL INNOVATION:** FarmedHere uses closed-loop aquaponic systems which enables them to raise fish and water vegetables in one location. This system uses up to 95% less water and 85% less energy than traditional farms, reducing carbon-footprint, and requiring no pesticides. Plants are growing under artificial LED lights. They reuse 97% of fresh water, without herbicides and pesticides, they are growing all year round. The system provides 25 harvests per year, with a 16 to 26 day growing cycle for leafy vegetables (source: http://farmedhere.com/).
- **ORGANIC:** the FarmedHere production technique is completely pesticide free, and uses organic fertilizer, and is certified organic by the USA’s government body the USDA.
- **CHANNELS:** they sell only to local (defined as within a 200 mile radius) retailers, and use their own distribution transport system.
- **MARKETING:** through social media, websites, educational tours and presentations, products and production is promoted. Main messages are the organic certified, the local nature of their produce, and the health benefits.
- **FINANCE:** the one location so far is financed by five private entrepreneurs.
- **PARTNERS:** FarmedHere collaborates with Illumitex, Farmer’s Fridge for marketing and Windy City Harvest for education and research.
- **EMPLOYEES:** FarmedHere has 40+ employees. The employees have access to a continual education and training program. The company hires local staff through a number of social impact programs. FarmedHere also provides many opportunities for local groups to learn more about growing plants, food healthy, safety and sustainability.

**COMMERCIAL VERTICAL FARMING INITIATIVES**

**FARMEDEHERE**

**Location:** Illinois, USA  
**Size:** 27,500 m²  
**Year Commercial:** 2013  
**Products:** herbs, green vegetables and fish  
**Founders:** five private entrepreneurs  
**Partners:** private partnership

\(^1\) Total available crop space, divided across multiple layers.
IMPACT – BUSINESS
With organic certified products from their vertical farm, FarmedHere has a higher market prices than average. However, the demand for organic and sustainable crops is growing. FarmedHere was the first USDA Organic Certified aquaponic indoor operation in the USA.

IMPACT - ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL
With their growing technology and systems, combined with their ‘stay local’ approach, FarmedHere has significantly reduced energy use, carbon footprint of distribution, and the use of harmful chemicals. This type of indoor farm enables the production of continual harvests, optimizing the use of resources and making their one location also a profitable business. FarmedHere takes other steps to minimize the impact on the environment. They only work with Green Printers (as reported by the Printing Industry of America), who use soy based inks to further reduce environmental impact. As well as only using their proprietary green paper packaging that uses over 90% less plastic compared to traditional boxes.