

Compass introduces urban farm to its headquarters

3 years ago



Vertical farming has arrived at Compass Group UK & Ireland's headquarters – Compass House, Chertsey.

The UK's largest food and support services provider has partnered with Square Mile Farms, to introduce an urban farm, bringing ultra-fresh sustainable produce to its chefs and Compass colleagues on site, further supporting its use of innovation to achieve climate net zero by 2030.

Using a clever hydroponic system, a small pump circulates nutrient rich water from a tank to each column of plants. The water trickles down, feeding the plants at their roots. The high-efficiency LED lights help the plants to grow indoors, all year round. The new farm at Chertsey HQ will be used by its chefs, who have asked initially to grow, Kale, Coriander, Tatsoi. In a month's time – the farm will be harvested, and the chefs will use the products in their menus. Additionally, Compass colleagues will be invited to take home any leftover produce. Harvests will then take place every two weeks from then on.

By growing vertically, the farm can use a bigger surface area, allowing the urban space to be put to good use, growing up to 189 edible plants, all year round. The hydroponic systems use 90% less water than some conventional growing methods and of course there are no food miles. The seedlings are farmed from Square Mile Farms' rooftop farm in Paddington, London.

Commenting on bringing Square Mile Farms to Compass House, Pete Champain, Head of Innovation, Compass Group UK & Ireland said:

"We are delighted to be working with Square Mile Farms. Bringing urban farms to Chertsey, enables us to practice what we preach. By using this innovative and sustainable growing system, we can grow our own fresh produce on site. Our chefs are looking forward to the first harvest and it's a great way of generating

important conversations with our teams about sustainable food.”

Patrick Dumas, Co-founder, Square Mile Farms added:

“Our mission is to empower people to make healthier and more sustainable food choices. It’s therefore a privilege to work with Compass Group, and their head office team, whose values around food align so closely with ours. We’re collaborating to truly get the team closer to their food – we can’t wait for the first harvest!”