

# GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR REMOTE PRODUCTION SUPPORT

By Fokke Buwalda, Wageningen UR Greenhouse Horticulture

**Investments in Dutch greenhouses and production systems are being made all around the world. Installing hardware does not in itself guarantee success, however. Much more is required. Thanks to the intensive use of internet technologies this hardware can now be delivered with crop support from the Netherlands, aided by simulation models developed by Wageningen UR Greenhouse Horticulture.**

Intelligent use of internet tools enables growers worldwide to receive production support from the Netherlands. Dutch crop consultancy firm GreenQ is one of the leading players in this emerging field, already supporting scores of companies abroad. Production support is provided by means of weekly consultations via Skype, based on data downloaded from the climate computer and optional crop sensors. Production registration and crop images made by the grower on site are an essential addition.

### Remote support

"Production support in other regions than the Netherlands is complex. There are many aspects involved," according to Herbert Stolker of GreenQ. The first step is to make a production plan, in which the successful Dutch production method is adapted to fit the actual local conditions. The subsequent realisation of the production plan is a matter of monitoring, timely detection of deviations and making the necessary adjustments.

One of the companies making use of remote production support is Alexander Melnychenko's nursery in the Ukraine. Last year, Melnychenko switched from growing roses to cultivating

tomatoes and hired GreenQ for support. On-line support is provided weekly, whereas a GreenQ consultant travels to the Ukraine for an on-site visit once a month. "These visits are extremely important," underlined Stolker. "Support via the computer alone is insufficient and it is not enough for consultants to only get data from the company. They also need to actually see and feel the situation in the greenhouse once in a while."

### Perspective

"Monitoring and simulation models are playing an increasingly important role in greenhouse horticulture via remote production management and advisory systems," said Fokke Buwalda of Wageningen UR Greenhouse Horticulture. By providing extra information about the crop status and calculating production forecasts, models can narrow the gap between consultant and grower. Service quality increases, while the necessity of costly and time-consuming company visits abroad is reduced. During the HortiSeminar, Buwalda introduced a new online model that can link to information systems from other parties, such as GreenQ's GreenScheduler. It is the first in a series of next-generation online models under development by Wageningen UR Greenhouse Horticulture. Interest in this new service has already been shown from India, the Middle East, several Eastern European countries and the USA.

Partner in this HortiSeminar: [GreenQ](#)