EVERY SQUARE METRE COUNTS

By Erik Pekkeriet, Wageningen UR Greenhouse Horticulture

While many pot plant growers think that their greenhouses are full, this is often not the case. The question is: How full are their greenhouses really and what options exist to better utilise greenhouse space? Berg Hortimotive advocates better linked systems and a more accurate insight into orders and production planning.

BergVision is a greenhouse planning system which links and optimises processes. It has already been implemented at various pot plant companies, including Bunnik Plants and Anthura, both in Bleiswijk (NL). According to Advisor ICT Solutions, IT will become an increasingly important aspect in determining the chain.

Measurements and experiences

BergVision integrates IT systems, from machine controls, production planning and order shipments to complete ERP systems. "The system combines experiences," Theo Willemse of Berg Hortimotive explained. "Not only sales employees can provide input for planning - their colleagues can also record measurements and experiences in the system."

"Our employees have lots of knowledge and expertise," Danny Fiere of Bunnik Plants continued. "This can be hard to transfer, however, which hinders optimisation. Changes can only be realised when they are well-founded, and BergVision facilitates this."

The system analyses processes and almost always indicates that room is available in the greenhouse. "A more efficient use of space offers major opportunities," according to Willemse. "Potential results include more profitable margins or ensuring faster delivery times with equal reliability."

Experience in practice

Mark van de Knaap of Anthura: "We started designing a 'Garden Utopia'. We then looked at how far we were removed from it and used the new insights to start the realisation. At the moment we have linked our order management, stock management, logistics system and plant watering. As a result, if we are planning to ship a batch by air, I can indicate that the plants should not be watered. It is important to keep on top of everything though as the system will not run itself." Fiere van Bunnik Plants continued: "Our company also started developing a large functional design, which is extremely important. If you don't know where you're going, you'll never get there."

Eric van 't Boveneind of IT company Advisor ICT Solutions sees the future as follows: "All systems will be linked. If a flower shop owner orders flowers online, he can immediately look into the grower's stock. The grower, in turn, is the only one who can add information. This will increase the power of the producer and create a more direct link between consumers and producers."

IT is helping to shorten and accelerate the chain. As a result higher delivery speeds, increased reliability, client-specific quality and the successful sale of niche products are within reach. "The BergVision system will soon also be available to smaller pot plant businesses," Theo Willemse concluded.

Partner in this HortiSeminar: BergHortimotive