

GERONIMO Crop Report – Week #31

Belgium, July 28th, 2003

The recent warm period resulted in very fast crops this year. Geronimo is already being harvested, while some growers still have the old plants in between the rows. The tomatoes are large and have a good quality. Geronimo appears also to be strong against radial cracking. Clusters of two fruits occur sometimes higher in the plants, but this depends on the crop.

Climate setpoints:

Be careful with the pipe setpoints: minimum pipe N (30-35°C) not before 02:00 hrs; minimum pipe D (40°C) from 2 to 3 hours before sunrise to 03:00 hours after, with a strong reduction on light. Activate the crop during the morning hours and let the sun do the rest. Do not have a minimum pipe during the evening and pre-night as long as it is warm. In other word, there's no pipe when vents are wide open.

However, when the nights get cooler and there is less light during the day, we adjust the setpoints. A good night temperature might be 16.5-17°C, not higher in order to keep the growing points large so that the number of trusses with two or three fruits is reduced in favor of larger clusters.

Irrigation:

Optimal irrigation is critical in this period. Next month, days will be 1.5 hours shorter. Stop and start each week ten minutes earlier and later respectively. Start now at 08:30 hrs and stop close to 17:30 hrs if it is sunny. Pay attention when it suddenly gets dark. With darker weather, start at least a half hour later and stop before 17:00 hrs.

Geronimo needs a little more water. Think of 4 cc per Joule of light /m². Aim for enough drain on sunny days, up to 40%. A leaching rate of 20% is too low for Geronimo.

The EC stays too high in a few places. It is better to give longer cycles (i.e. 150 cc) than to water frequently. Between 11:00 and 14:00 hrs the drip EC can be 2 – 2.2. Watch out that the slab EC does not get too low by dripping with a low EC continuously. Start and finish with a sufficiently high EC (2.9 – 3.1) to make sure that the plants can take up enough minerals.

Those who have not yet checked the uniformity of the drippers should do it soon. We still see poor irrigation with varying pH leading to poorer crops, with for instance reduced root development and pale heads as a result.

Cluster support

The heavy clusters of Geronimo should from now on be supported to get optimum sizing of the fruit. The first clusters and the two's do not need support. Best results are obtained in the fall with 'J-hooks'. It goes fast and in this period the clusters are too advanced to work with arches. Continue to cluster prune to four fruits.