

Matrix Crop report – Week#3 Belgium, January 13th, 2003

2003 started with flooding in certain areas and severe cold up to now. Also, a few new varieties will have to prove themselves this year. Mainly Matrix and DRW 7106 are the most important newcomers among the large beef types. There are 15 ha of Matrix and various trials of DRW 7106 in Belgium. Starting now, you can therefore expect comments about Matrix on this web site.

At this moment it is difficult to achieve the right temperature inside the greenhouse. In various greenhouses the night temperature makes it only to 15°C with a pipe temperature of 80°C maximum. Higher temperatures (to 17°C) are only possible if there is also a grow-pipe. Provided that this pipe is high enough above the plants, the temperature can be the same as that of the main system. If condenser heat is used, it can hang closer to the plants. Watch out with dark weather, because then there is the risk that the heads can become too thin.

Sowings of up to November 10 have been put on the hole by now. The first clusters look good and seem to become nice. Trusses with two fruits have been seen already and this must be taken into account when cluster pruning. Prune the first two clusters to a total of five fruits (January setting) to avoid too large a fruit load. We want that the plant keeps on growing when close to picking. If the fruit load is too large near first harvest, with dark weather, it can lead to leaf necrosis and square fruit.

Consider a top-up irrigation cycle (22.00 – 23.00hrs) during freezing temperatures to avoid dry blocks and also where rooting volumes are small (for instance in V-systems).

Below is an overview of temperature set points. Should they turn out to be lower, no problem. Think in terms of plant temperature and the direct effect of radiation from the pipe-rails. Temperatures for early sowings can be:

Night: 17°C + 1°C on light

Day: 19°C + 2°C on light

Later sowings: N 17°C + 2 on light; D 19°C + 3 on light.

This is a fairly generative regime. However, later in the crop we will adjust the steering earlier than with Quest for instance.