

Matrix Crop Report – Week #23
Belgium June 3rd, 2004

The weather will not be very good in the next few days. There will be little sun and the temperatures will be on the low side. We have to be careful therefore that the night temperature set points are not too low. We will, after all, achieve these targets without any difficulty. We suggest set points of 16.5 to 17°C. The day may be 1°C warmer.

For growers who plan to interplant it is important to plant an as large as possible a plant; the first truss should flower within a few days. Also put the drippers on the new blocks right away and continue with the same irrigation schedule. Make sure that the slab is thoroughly wet when the new plants are set out and continue to water often, even during dark days. The roots have to be ‘chased’ into the slabs.

A standard regime may be 17°C-17°C, but as soon as the first truss is setting it is better to change it to 17°C night and 16°C – 16.5°C day. The reason is to avoid very fast sizing of the fruits and subsequent cracking.

A few growers have problems with russetting. This is mainly because of high root pressure. This applies particularly to those growers who have topped, what resulted in strong new root development. Plant transpiration will also decrease and the fruit load will get smaller. The fact that the nights are still cool also increases the risk of russetting.

To reduce the risk it is important to increase the night temperature 0.5°C to 1°C immediately after topping. Reduce the day temperature as well; otherwise the 24-hr temperature will be too high. In addition, sufficient deleafing to keep the plant in balance can also help. The amount of irrigation must also be reduced slowly and high pipe temperatures must be avoided so that there are no large peaks in transpiration.