

QUEST Crop report – Week#12
March 18, 2002

At the present time there is a fairly large Botrytis pressure in various greenhouses. There are a number of reasons:

- Growers who did not replace the groundsheet clearly have more problems than those who replaced everything.
- Also the location of the compost pile has an effect. Where the pile is upwind from the greenhouse, the incidence of Botrytis is larger.
- Limit the pipe temperature to 65 degrees C so that it does not get too warm in the greenhouse after a rain shower. The heat does not need to be vented out then. Don't forget that far open vents allowing cold air to come inside are ideal conditions for Botrytis.
- Go through the crop to specifically treat the Botrytis spots.
- Break or cut leaves during the morning hours, preferably when it is also sunny. If this is not the case, temporarily increase the minimum pipe temperature 5 degrees C to speed up the drying of the wounds.

On sunny days we make sure that the pipe temperature is not too high. The fruits are already fairly large and a high pipe temperature while sunny may lead to BER. Reduce therefore the pipe temperature in time, for instance - 15 degrees C.

Continue to steer towards a strong head. Suggested set points are:

Day, 18.5 to 19 degrees C;

Night, 16.5 to 17 degrees.

When cold, the vent temperature can be increased 1 degree to avoid an influx of cold air.

Keep the crops open to maximise light penetration. In other words, allow light on the lower clusters. For the moment, we are satisfied with 12 - 14 leaves per plant. Fruits exposed to light swell a bit better and it improves air circulation at the lower part of the plants.

Also keep an eye on the K concentration, especially when the fruits are swelling quickly. Have a sample analysed and feed extra K.

It is better not to do the clipping too early in the morning but to do it a little later when the plant turgor is lower.

Pay extra attention to irrigation on the day of clipping. Do not water before the plant becomes active and starts to transpire. This begins when the stomata open, in other words, when the CO₂ concentration in the greenhouse begins to drop.

The next 2 or 3 trusses are still pruned to 4 fruits in order to maximise size and production. If size is a higher priority than production, continue to prune to 4 longer.