Plant nursery Kapteijns works with CleanLight:

Resilient strawberry plants without mildew first step in growing cycle

During the breeding of strawberry plants in the greenhouse of plant nursery Kapteijns, a spray boom 'flies' over the crops on a regular basis. That in itself is not that noticeable, but the UV lights attached to the spray boom are. These UV lights are used to fight mildew without using the conventional methods. Piet-Hein Kapteijns of the plant nursery had this to say: “Since we started using CleanLight technology I haven’t taken any chemical actions against mildew.”

The mother plants, that grow up in the greenhouses in the Dutch province of Brabant, are all the way at the beginning of their cycle now, which should eventually result in delicious strawberries. But before that, five years pass in which the strawberry plants are being prepared for optimal production. Piet-Hein: "The crops stay in the greenhouse for a long time, from April till January. Normally we needed to fight off mildew with chemicals on a regular basis. In the 1.5 hectare greenhouse, where we now use modules with UV lights to fight off the mildew, the use of chemicals is no longer needed."

Fully automatic
The switch was made three years ago. “At that time we just acquired a fully automatic spray boom. Because we like to be ahead of the curve and are always up for trying new developments, we then made the choice to start working with CleanLight technology. In the beginning, getting the right settings was a bit of a challenge, but it wasn’t long before we figured them out.”

The UV lights at Kapteijns hang on an 8-meter wide spray boom that has been programmed to move over the crops. “The advantage of this is that it doesn’t require extra labor. And since no extra time is needed for the UV treatment, the temptation to skip it is non-existent. Which is important, because if you skip a few days you will already have lost the great effect.”

Pre-emptive
It is in the pre-emptive treatment of the strawberry plant where the true strength of the technology lies. “The treatment with UV light makes it so that no mildew can develop, but at the same time the UV light gives the plant more compact leaves and makes the plant more resilient overall. Another added benefit is that because no chemicals are being used against mildew, no resistance is being built up against them. Because of this, if a client has to use them, the chemicals are stronger and more effective than if a resistance would have been built up.”

At first glance, it might seem like an unattainable solution, but it has proven to work. Piet-Hein can confirm this as well. “We also propagate strawberry plants in locations where the technology has not yet been used. Chemicals still need to be used there sometimes.”

The choice to go for CleanLight technology fits in with the decreasing use of conventional methods.

Piet-Hein: “If you choose to go for the technology that is seemingly a given, you are already thinking in a sustainable way in other areas. For instance, we have been cultivating without the use of fertilizer to improve the roots for a long time now. Just like CleanLight technology, it provides us with better and stronger plants, so our clients can pick a better-quality strawberry from it in the future.”

For more information:

CleanLight
www.cleanlight.nl
info@cleanlight.nl

Plantenkwekerij Kapteijns
www.plantenkwekerijkapteijns.nl
kaptplan@planet.nl

Publication date : 9/13/2018