

## PEPPER GROWER PLEUN VERHEUL ABOUT TOPCROP MONITOR

Over a year ago pepper grower Pleun Verheul became an active participant in the Priva TopCrop Monitor pilot project.

- > **Focuses on the plant as the starting point**
- > **Continuous insight into crop activity**
- > **New control instrument to improve the regulation of your settings**
- > **Higher yield per square meter**
- > **Expert and committed support to help get you started**

### Challenge

Pleun Verheul is the owner of pepper nursery PP Verheul, in 's-Gravenzande in The Netherlands. The greenhouse, covering an area of 4 hectares, grows its majority of the crop on perlite. The goal of PP Verheul is to continuously surprise the consumer with freshness of the product and peppers of the best quality.

### Solution

Priva TopCrop Monitor allows growers to adjust their cultivation actions based on what happens inside the plant, instead of what happens with environmental factors around the plant. The steering instrument visualizes the crop activity based on the analysis of the evaporation of the plant. With the infrared camera, which measures the temperature of the crop with sensors, the TopCrop Monitor compares the temperature of the crop with the temperature in the greenhouse.

### Benefits

TopCrop Monitor allowed Pleun Verheul to measure crop activity in real time and control accordingly. This eventually resulted in a smaller leaf, a good fruit size and higher production.

More than a year ago Pleun Verheul became an active participant in the Priva TopCrop Monitor pilot project. He was spurred on by his colleagues, but had a personal interest in it as well. "I wanted to experience for myself the extent to which TopCrop Monitor can optimize crop activity, by carefully analyzing the plant evaporation process. Seeing is believing." TopCrop Monitor is already being used by more than 60 customers worldwide. Dutch pepper grower Pleun Verheul is also enthusiastic. In Verheul's company, one department has been equipped with TopCrop Monitor, consisting of an additional measuring unit and a highly accurate plant temperature sensor. Verheul uses the information from the measuring equipment in this department to optimize his entire crop.

"A lot of settings you use and choices you make for ventilation, water and temperature are based on trusting your own knowledge and skills. The experience acquired after years of being a pepper grower," says Verheul. "When I first started the pilot I found it difficult to make a choice when TopCrop Monitor would suggest a different strategy than my own intuition. After more than a year I can say that I fully trust the new system. TopCrop Monitor provides direct insight into the effect on crop activity and helps me make the right choices with respect to my cultivation strategy."

### **Eye-opener**

TopCrop Monitor can be really confronting. For instance, Verheul was away on holiday during a warm period in summer last year. He had to rely on the Priva Connex's measurements. To avoid the worst heat, Verheul chose to protect the crop by closing a screen. He was still reluctant to blindly trust TopCrop Monitor and decided to follow his own instinct and growing experience. As a result, crop activity increased. The closed screen caused the plants to become more active and thus more vegetative.

Verheul: "After four days of warm weather and my return from vacation I immediately walked into the greenhouse to check out the crop. Right away, I noticed that the plants had become too vegetative. The crop consultant also confirmed it. Even if it went against my instinct, TopCrop monitor's assessment was still the best. It was a real eye-opener. I immediately adjusted my strategy for hot days."

### **Result**

In autumn, the fruit's leaf size and quantity had always been an issue. Due to the changing circumstances and a more vegetative crop, the leaf grew bigger. TopCrop Monitor allowed Verheul to measure crop activity in real time and control accordingly. This eventually resulted in a smaller leaf, a good fruit size and higher production, which is very important for Verheul. He remarks that it took a while: "You need to know what buttons to push to steer the crop in the right direction."

According to Verheul, Priva TopCrop Monitor is primarily a means to monitor and steer cultivation based on its measurements and to potentially avoid mistakes. If TopCrop Monitor is used in a monoculture, measurements in only one department provide sufficient insight for the entire crop. For specific crop measurements, multiple locations and/or crops, you need to install more monitors. Not all crops and greenhouses are the same, after all.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TOPCROP

Contact our expert!



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