



## “USE WATER EFFICIENTLY, IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT RAW MATERIAL ON EARTH”

The Grower Files > Ulrich Osterloh of Erdbeerhof Osterloh on water management

His passion is clear: he wants to be the best strawberry producer in Germany, or better still, in all of Europe. Ulrich Osterloh is not merely an expert in his field; he genuinely lives and breathes strawberries. His business, Erdbeerhof Osterloh, grows strawberries on more than 250 ha of land. The large number of new polytunnels is striking, a sign of the transition to covered crops. They reduce the risks that reoccur each year with outdoor cultivation. “Last winter, for example, we were very lucky with the frost, and hail is also a constant threat.” Covered cultivation provides protection and offers the possibility of heating the greenhouses. “And, very important, we can regulate the dosage of water and fertilizers much better”.

### Most important raw material

He can hardly wait to start using the new 10 ha tunnels, but even with his large-scale outdoor [cultivation of strawberries](#) Ulrich Osterloh does everything to ensure that water is used as efficiently as possible. His reasons for this are concise and clear: “Water is the most important raw material on earth. So we must exploit all the technical possibilities available to use it as efficiently as possible.”

For over 20 years, [Erdbeerhof Osterloh](#) has used drip irrigation instead of sprayers on its more than 200 hectares of strawberry fields in and around the German village of Visbek. “This means the plants get exactly what they need; no more and no less.” Of course, with outdoor crops a lot of rain water is lost in this way. “That’s one of the reasons we are increasingly opting for polytunnels and investing in [high-quality Priva systems](#), which make it possible to reuse water. This will enable us to achieve significant savings. We are building a basin to store the drain water from the gutters in the tunnels.”

### Water footprint

The strawberry farm has purchased a recirculation system that recycles the collected drain water and makes it suitable for reuse. Osterloh has opted for the [NutriFlex](#), which enables him to give the strawberry plants the right amount of water and fertilizers at the right time, controlled by his [Priva Connex computer](#).

“It is becoming increasingly important to use our global water resources wisely. End customers are demanding that more and more from their producers. They can certainly expect that from us too; sustainability is an important element of our business operations and our ‘water footprint’ is something we pay attention to every day. It’s about my children’s future too,” emphasizes Ulrich Osterloh.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT USING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR WATER MANAGEMENT?

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