

management information system, FS performance, since January 2017: “Savings between 10 and 20% on harvesting costs are definitely possible.”

He can hardly wait. In a few weeks, aubergine grower Peter Boekestijn will analyse the data gathered by his new management information system from Priva in detail and translate it into clear standards for the new year. He has been working with FS Performance since January 2017. The focus in the first year was primarily on gaining experience and collecting data. Looking at the experiences and results of other growers, he is confident to say that he will save between 10 and 20% on his harvesting costs in 2018.

The period before the purchase of the information system was turbulent. High costs in difficult times meant that certain investments were delayed or cancelled in the past. For example, the aging and defective path registration system was not replaced; instead growers switched back to old-fashioned manual labour. However, a good system to keep track of work and harvests has always remained high on the wish list. Last year, room opened up for investments. Through supplier Royal Brinkman Peter Boekestijn got acquainted with Priva’s management information system, FS Performance.

Positive effect on productivity

“Most of all, I was looking for a simple system that everyone on the farm can use. This is essential when you are working with less-educated employees or those who speak a different language. Clear symbols and practical hand terminals that can simply be taken into the field are what I want.” Boekestijn started working with FS Performance at the beginning of this calendar year.

In part based on practical advice from colleagues, he is not yet holding his staff to account for the results that were registered this year. “As a business owner, it is important not to be too strict in the first year like this. But we did start on presenting performance immediately.” It was quickly found that simply making this performance visible and public - with a screen in the canteen - had a positive effect on employee behaviour. “When the computer stopped working while I was on holiday, the manager immediately observed a drop in harvesting capacity. That says it all: people do keep an eye on each other and that keeps everyone sharp.”



Weighbridge gives a detailed picture

Peter Boekestijn sees this first year as a detailed benchmark measurement. “Now it is important to translate all these data into new standards and agreements. The harvest standards this year are based on the average crate weight. Employees enter the number of crates harvested per path into the system. This has the disadvantage that one person might pick a crate fuller than another. We need to make this correction regularly.” Further automation is the desired next step. “We will be working with a weighbridge with each crate harvested is linked to the employee by means of a tag. This gives a much more detailed and fairer picture of the harvesting performance delivered.”

Better insight into work attitude and speed paves the way to a next step: a bonus scheme. “Now, an employee might see themselves on top of the performance list all year, but not see that reflected in their pay packet. This has a very demotivational effect. There is also no impulse for the person at the bottom of the list to step it up. Colleagues’ experiences have shown that a bonus system gives an impulse to productivity. Then you actually need to slow people down, primarily by continuing to pay close attention to quality. For aubergines, quality means keeping close to the target fruit weight, and especially not harvesting too small, which hurts production and also hinders colleagues in the second harvesting round.”



Significant savings

At Boekestijn Eggplant, work means harvesting and packing. Experience is important because it is not an everyday crop, which also involves the risk of allergic reactions on contact with the crop. That is why Peter takes care of his team and aims to stimulate them with good working conditions, clear standards, and a bonus system. “At our company, taking on new employees requires extra attention. Three new staff members on a Monday morning is a problem. One new employee can come into a packing crew of four, for harvesting it is 1 to 7.”

The first year of working with FS Performance has already given the young entrepreneur an excellent picture of the possibilities. He will be studying the data after the crop change this coming winter. It is already clear to him that a lot can be improved. “In part on the basis of the experiences of colleagues, I can say that we will save between 10 and 15% on harvesting next year, and we’ll also be able to work much more transparently. It needs to be up and running by the beginning of February.”

More information about FS Performance?

Feel free to contact our account manager!

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