

Lim

News

Newsletter
November 2006



Limseeds Newsletter new style

You're currently reading the Limseeds Newsletter in its new style, a newsletter in which we want to inform you about current issues regarding the cultivation of asparagus and provide news about our organisation.

Within the layout of this newsletter you'll find a varied offering of interesting facts, presented in a clear and easy-to-read layout. The newsletter will be published about 5 times per year and will be sent to cultivators of asparagus and asparagus plant breeders. We hope that you can use this newsletter as a valuable source of information. If you do not wish to receive the newsletter, you can

contact us via info@limseeds.com or call +31 (0)77 397 9900. These are also the channels to contact for suggestions or tips.

We trust you'll enjoy reading the current and future newsletters.

Limseeds Newsletter new style

Limseeds goes commercial

Cost of plant material

Better quality with salt?



Limseeds goes commercial

You will probably have noticed that Limseeds has added the sale of seeds of the well-known "Lim" varieties to its own catalogue as from July 1. We have put all our activities under the umbrella of one organisation, ranging from the first cross-fertilisations in the greenhouse to delivery of the seeds. We think that this step will enable us to have closer contact with the buyers of our seeds and the users of our varieties, i.e. the plant breeders and asparagus cultivators, respectively. This provides us with important market information, which is significant in order to be able to respond adequately to new developments and trends within the asparagus industry. We also want to provide specific information and optimal advice to

cultivators and plant breeders regarding the assortment of Limseeds varieties. Our regular buyers of seeds will notice that we changed the packaging, but the contents have remained the same. The seed is coated bright green, which facilitates keeping an eye on planting depths and the growth process.

Within our company, Product Manager Piet Beurskens is responsible for the sale of seeds, and for providing the necessary support to cultivators.

Limseeds®
the asparagus breeding company

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Cost of plant material

The cost of white asparagus is a subject which is discussed frequently at meetings of cultivators. No one knows the exact cost, but a simple calculation for "normal" cultivation varies between € 2.00 and € 2.30 / kg. While a margin of € 0.30 per kg might not seem much, it is a considerable amount if calculated against the total production. Do you know what your plant material costs per marketable kg are? That is not an easy question. Let's have a look at it based on the following criteria:

- marketable production of 45,000 kg/ha over 7 years of harvesting
- planting costs: € 0.26 / plant
- number of plants per hectare: 22,000

In this example, € 0.13 from each marketable kg covers plant material costs. If the planting costs were € 0.50 instead of € 0.26, € 0.24 per sold product would cover plant material costs. That leaves a difference of € 0.11 in planting costs per kilo of marketable asparagus. So, in this example, plant material costing € 0.50 in reality is only € 0.11 per marketable kilo more than plant material costing € 0.26.

When choosing varieties, the higher price of Avalim and Herkolim is often used as a reason to choose a less expensive variety. Although each argument is valid and everyone is free to make their own choices, it should be taken into account that the reluctance to pay that higher price is often not justified. The following calculation will clarify this.

In order to compensate for the higher costs of plant material, according to the example above you'd have to earn a minimum of € 0.11 per kilo more, which corresponds with approximately € 700.- per hectare per

year. Among other things, this amount can be earned back by a higher productivity, a higher average price by means of better sorting, or less labour costs. A minimal kilogramme yield increase of 3% of Herkolim compared to Grolim already amounts to about 200 kg per year. The more uniform and qualitatively better sorting of Herkolim compared to Grolim is not only reflected in a higher average price, but also in higher harvesting and sorting performances. The amount of € 700.- per hectare per year is thus swiftly compensated.

The comparison is different in the case of Avalim, which on average produces less kilogramme yield than Gijnlim, but because of its significantly higher stem weight it has better grades and therefore a higher average price. When the season is advanced, the grades of Avalim remain at a higher level than Gijnlim, also over a number of years. A very realistic higher average price of 5% compensates a net production of only 500 kg.



Besides, the harvesting and sorting costs of Avalim are lower than those of Gijnlim.

Above calculation shows that the planting costs as part of the total costs are relatively low, that they would be compensated over a short period of time by a small yield increase (either through quality or weight) and subsequently lead to a further increase of the yield.

Don't let a higher plant price deter you, as in many cases a higher investment in plant material would result in higher net totals in the end. Take a look at the possibilities by getting more information, or starting with a limited amount of Avalim or Herkolim next to your current varieties.

Keep an eye on the costs of your company, calculate your costs and look at possibilities to lower them without decreasing your productivity.

Better quality with salt?

American studies in the early 1900's already showed that the use of NaCl salt led to an increase in the productivity and strength of growth of asparagus. The most important reason for the use of salt in those days was its anti-weed properties. When the first chemical weed killers were introduced successfully around 1940, the use of salt lost its popularity. But from that moment on, the problems with Fusarium spp. also increased.

New studies were launched in the United States in the late 1980's, and those showed again that annual use of salt lead to more productivity and strength of growth. Another conclusion was that the roots of the plants contained less Fusarium fungus. This could be an important reason for the lengthening of the productive lifespan.

In the south of the Netherlands, an increasing number of cultivators are using salt in quantities between 1500 and 3000 kg (40-50% NaCl) per hectare. Most times it's applied shortly before ploughing the soil.

The main reason for using salt is to decrease rust problems (of which it's assumed more often that Fusarium is the culprit). While the results are not always unanimous, most of the time they are positive. Once again, salt is gaining its own place amidst cultivation techniques. The existing fear of some that salt might be harmful to the crop is not correct. Asparagus is a plant that could originally be found mainly along the coast, and even grew on brackish soil. Contrary to many other vegetables, asparagus has a very good resistance to salt.

Company information

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Information about varieties developed by us (Avalim, Backlim, Gijnlim, Grolim, Herkolim, Horlim and Thielim) can be obtained from our variety specialists. They can be reached using the telephone and fax number or email address stated above.

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