

# **DLV PLANT (UK) Ltd**

## **Soft Fruit Prospectus 2012**



**The Best Soft Fruit Advice from Holland, UK, and beyond....**

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[www.dlvplant.co.uk](http://www.dlvplant.co.uk).**

# **DLV PLANT UK Ltd**

## **SOFT FRUIT PROSPECTUS - 2012**

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## **Introduction.**

**DLV Plant UK Ltd was the name chosen for a joint venture, established in November 2007, between Soft Fruit Solutions, and DLV Plant BV, Holland.**

The objective of the new company was to pool together the local knowledge and crop expertise of Soft Fruit Solutions with the technical excellence and significantly larger resources and scientific knowledge-base of DLV Plant BV. At that time, both parties were independently providing technical advice to growers and supply companies operating in the berry fruit production industry throughout the UK and Eire, specialising in leading edge consultancy at the highest technical level.

By combining resources, talents and expertise, DLV Plant UK offers Soft Fruit growing clients in the UK and Eire access to the highest level of independent technical expertise available within Northern Europe. Over the next few years, DLV Plant UK will continue to invest in personnel and technical resources to maintain the most dynamic advice and consultancy package to growers operating within this rapidly expanding sector of the fresh produce industry.

Specialist Soft Fruit advice provided by DLV Plant UK relates to all aspects of propagating, growing and marketing of: Strawberries, Raspberries (and other Cane Fruits), Blueberries, Blackcurrants (and other related Bush fruits). Through our Dutch colleagues, we have access to expertise and high quality information on all growing systems employed in Holland and continental Europe. We also have access to Dutch expertise in other sectors of Horticulture (e.g. Nursery Stock, Asparagus and Protected Salads) and are looking to recruit UK-based staff to support and service grower clients operating within these sectors.

Our guiding ethos remains that of maintaining a high level of service and personal contact with each client, providing cost effective value added advice and back-up services, which will enable individual businesses to grow.

## **Background History of the Founding Parties**

**Soft Fruit Solutions** was established by Dennis Wilson in 1999, as a fully integrated team of independent advisors, providing high quality, independent advice to soft fruit growers throughout the UK. As of 1st January, 2008, all SFS staff transferred across to DLV Plant UK Ltd. This currently numbers 7 advisors + admin support staff

**DLV Plant BV**. is a large, multi-disciplinary Agri-Consulting business, employing 170 technical and ancillary staff, throughout Europe and beyond. It was formerly owned by the Dutch Government but is now wholly owned by its employees. DLV Plant BV, has a world-class reputation in the field of Agro-Consultancy, and undertakes its own scientific research, as well as providing operational, strategic, planning and turn-key consultancy across all sectors in Agriculture and Horticulture. The company's Berry Fruit team numbering 12 in total, is widely regarded as the best in Northern Europe, and is expanding to meet increased demand for its products and services.

By a process of continuous knowledge exchange between UK and Dutch staff, and by significant investment in high level training, DLV Plant UK Ltd aims to provide the most up-to-date technical support to clients. As the demand for advice has increased in the Soft Fruit Sector, we have recruited additional qualified and experienced staff. In order to provide an increased level of support to clients, our staff undergo continuous training and professional development.

## **DLV Plant UK Advisory/Support Staff**

The current UK-based staff roster of DLV Plant UK is as follows:

- Dennis Wilson, Senior Advisor & Managing Director,
- David Wood, Senior Advisor & Director,
- Robin Bacon, Soft Fruit Advisor,
- Jeremy Darby, Soft Fruit Advisor,
- Valdas Kuciauskas, Soft Fruit Advisor,
- Dave Cuthbert, Soft Fruit Advisor,
- Kasia Winiarska, Trainee Soft Fruit Advisor
- Terry Grimshaw, Irrigation and Plant Nutrition Specialist
- Louise Saunders, Office Administrator,

From Holland, DLV Plant BV supports UK/Eire Soft Fruit grower clients mainly through:

- Ad van Laarhoven, Senior Advisor & Manager of the Berry Fruit Team
- Klaas Walraven, Senior Strawberry Advisor
- Marcel Beekers, Strawberry Adviser and specialist in SQMS®

Other staff from DLV Plant BV may be drawn upon to provide specialist support on soft fruit propagation, plant physiology and other crops, as required.

For the 2012 season, existing consultancy arrangements to UK/Eire clients of DLV Plant UK will be honoured and the same advisory personnel (UK or Dutch based) will be made available. During the course of the year, discussions will take place with all clients to determine their future requirements. These discussions will be customer led and it must be emphasised that clients will be fully consulted before any significant alteration to existing arrangements are made.

## **DLV Plant UK Ltd – Soft Fruit Products and Services (2012)**

This prospectus describes the range of services provided by DLV Plant UK Ltd to Soft Fruit growing clients for the coming season. Many of these products and services will be familiar to existing clients but additional products are being continually being developed by the in-house teams in Holland and UK.

We will be contacting all existing clients personally over the winter period, to discuss their requirements in more detail. In the meantime, we ask both existing and prospective customers to study this prospectus carefully before deciding on their consultancy support for 2011.

A summary of the range of products and services is given below:

1. **Enrolment and Technical Support Package.** Consisting of the market leading DLV Plant UK Technical Information Handbook and SOLA Database CD. Registered clients have access to the entire DLV Plant UK advisory team by email/ phone/fax, and access to specialist laboratory services with professional interpretation of results by DLV Plant staff from the UK and Holland. Registered clients also have access to unique products and services (e.g. SQMS) and will be invited to exclusive in-house technical events.
2. **On-Farm Advisory Visits.** Registered clients will be visited by a designated UK based consultant (or one from Holland where existing arrangements are in place), backed up by additional specialist visits from other members of the advisory team, if required.
3. **Laboratory Analysis.** Registered clients have access to a wide range of analytical and diagnostic services, utilising independent specialist laboratories for testing of soil, water, plant, and substrate samples, also pesticide residue testing, pest and disease diagnosis, and strawberry plant mapping. Professional interpretation of these results is given by DLV Plant staff from UK and Holland. Other specialist analysis (e.g. testing soils/water for microbiological and/or heavy metal content) can be arranged.
4. **Bespoke Nutrition Programmes.** Tailored nutrition programmes can be provided by FACTS Registered advisors for whole farm situations, or individual plots - based on our unrivalled knowledge Soft Fruit Nutrition and laboratory tests. In 2008, we launched **Nutri-Guide**, an individually tailored Excel Workbook providing the most comprehensive nutrition monitoring and fertilizer advice scheme in the industry.
5. **Strawberry Quality Monitoring System® (SQMS®).** Developed by DLV Plant BV, in Holland. This is a practical decision support system for Glasshouse and Tunnel Grown Elsanta Strawberries Information on climate (e.g. temperature, light, CO<sub>2</sub>) and weekly picking data is collected by the client and the data entered into the SQMS programme, which now situated on the DLV Plant-Agrimore web platform. The programme allows crop performance to be measured in terms of the dry matter balance and growth stage (based on Growing Degree Hours). Growers can then make informed climate and husbandry adjustments, to optimise yield, quality and plant growth characteristics. A separate model has also been developed for Elsanta Tray Plant Production to assist in growing specific types of plants for different purposes. The QMS® protocol is being expanded to encompass Cane Fruit Production and Propagation and is available for other Horticultural crops (e.g. Roses). Further development work to expand SQMS into other strawberry varieties (e.g. Sonata) and Everbearers) is ongoing - to provide a more complete SQMS® package on mixed farms.
6. **Sourcing Plant Material.** Using our extensive contacts in the UK and Holland, we are able to assist growers in sourcing the correct grades and types of plant material for specific

production systems. We can visit the plant supplier in place of, or with the client, to view plant material and provide detailed advice on selection of the best plants and most appropriate varieties. We can subsequently inspect chosen plants on behalf of the client, and provide training to client's staff on what to look for and how best to assess plants in the nursery, or on delivery at the client's farm.

7. **Essential Kit Supply.** We continue to offer high quality strawberry planting tools, soil corers for moisture monitoring, magnifying lenses for pest and disease identification, and assist in sourcing moisture, EC and pH testing devices at comparative rates.

We continually strive to improve the range and level of products and services on offer. If you have any comments or suggestions on this or any other matter, we are always pleased to receive client feedback.

## **DLV Plant UK - Enrolment and Technical Support Package**

All registered clients are required to enrol each year to the comprehensive DLV Plant UK Technical Support Package, which consists of the following component parts:

- a) **Technical Handbook.** This is distributed in February each year, and provides a fully inclusive list of approved insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and bio-control products, together with detailed application programs and other essential user information. Separate information is given for both outdoor and protected crops. Extra sections have been added to cover Soft Fruit Propagation, and by popular request from soft fruit growing clients information on field and protected Asparagus and Rhubarb.

Information is drawn from various sources, including: product labels and technical information sheets, as well as established commercial usage. All approvals are checked with both CRD (formerly PSD) and CSL Liaison databases for accuracy and approval status, just prior to issue.

For Irish growers, a separate and distinct data base is maintained and they receive a specifically Irish version of the handbook, which is cross referenced with the PCS and Teagasc websites just before publication.

The handbook also contains copies of FACTS and BASIS certificates for all members of the DLV Plant UK Team and useful information on pollination of soft fruits and the use of novel products to complement and help minimise conventional pesticide use.

- b) **SOLA Database CD.** As in previous years, an updated CD is sent out together with the Handbook, which contains copies of the ever-expanding numbers of Specific Off-Label Approvals (SOLA's) pertaining to Soft Fruit. By law, all growers must possess a copy of the SOLA and must read the directions prior to pesticide application, to ensure compliance with Statutory Conditions of Use. The CD format allows more flexible updating and reduced storage space on farm. Paper copies of all/pertinent SOLA's can be provided (on request) to clients who are not able to utilise the CD format.
- c) **Laboratory Services.** Enrolled clients have access to a wide range of Laboratory services, including the exclusive nutritional analysis service provided through NRM Ltd, a leading independent laboratory. Other services available to registered clients includes, Microbiological and Heavy Metal testing by NRM, Pesticide Residue testing by Exova Lawlabs, Strawberry Flower Counts through Planta Logica in Holland, and Pathological testing of Soil/Water/Plant Tissue samples at FERA, STC and East Malling. We have special arrangements with most of these laboratories to prioritise reporting directly to DLV Plant UK advisors, enabling us to provide clients with rapid, expert interpretation of results.
- d) **Telephone/Fax/E-mail Contact.** Enrolled clients have access to all members of the DLV Plant UK team, via phone/fax/E-mail to answer technical queries. Our aim is to respond to all enquiries within 6-12 hours but occasionally (eg at busy times/weekends/bank holidays), it may take a little longer.
- e) **Technical Updates/Special Events.** Enrolled clients also receive technical updates as necessary, and will be circulated with details of special events, such as seminars, organized visits/open days at growers/propagators in the UK and overseas. These events are exclusive to DLV Plant UK clients and details will be circulated nearer the time.

Payment for the Technical Support Package is by a one-off fee, each calendar year. Except by prior arrangement, invoicing is carried out early in January, Handbooks and the SOLA CD are distributed in February.

**Please Note.** Enrolment fees are paid **in addition** to separate charges for each visit. Additional charges will also be made for the following services: provision of reports/costings etc., preparation of bespoke nutrition programmes, and detailed interpretation of Laboratory results.

## On-Farm Advisory Visits.

On-Farm, advisory visits to clients, will be arranged with a single, designated advisor from the DLV Plant UK team. Additional specialist support from another member of the team can also be arranged, as per customer requirements.

For existing clients, visit schedules will be discussed during the latter part of the calendar year (October/November) for the coming season. Any changes to present on-farm visiting arrangements will be made only after discussion with the individual clients concerned.

For non-registered, prospective clients based in the UK, contact Dennis Wilson or your nearest DLV Plant UK advisor (see addresses at the front) to discuss requirements. We will then organise the most appropriate advisor to take on the day-to-day support and visit arrangements.

For non-registered, prospective clients based in Eire/N Ireland, contact David Cuthbert, who will organise day-to-day support and visit arrangements.

Unless otherwise agreed, all on-farm visits will be backed up by a written report made either at the time of visit - or sent direct to the client within 48 hours. The report format will be based on an ICMS Score Sheet - detailing levels of pests, diseases, etc. on a 0-5 scale where:

- 0 = no detectable level/problem - no action required.
- 1 = detectable level/problem - no action required in next 5-10 days.
- 2 = increasing level/problem - action required in next 5 -10 days.
- 3 = high level/problem - action required in next 3 - 5 days.
- 4 = very high level/problem - urgent action required in next 1 - 2 days.
- 5 = extensive problem causing substantial yield loss - urgent and sustained action required immediately.

For most clients, detailed agronomy recommendations will also be provided using the DLV Plant UK Production Schedule template. An alternative format will be used, only if specifically agreed with the client in advance.

Charges will include time spent writing up reports (at the same hourly rate), whether on site, or at the consultants home.

Clients may choose to receive their report in either of 2 formats:

- **duplicate paper**, written on the day of report, or faxed/posted with 48 hrs.
- **electronic report**, written on the day of report, or e-mailed within 48 hrs

As a rule, electronic reports take longer to produce (1-3 hrs) but contain more information and are quick/easy to distribute as a self-contained Excel workbook. Hand written duplicate paper reports are quicker to produce (30 mins to 1 hr) but contain less detailed information, and unless done on the day, are slower to distribute by fax/post.

In order to assist work planning, the approximate number, type of, and duration of visits required for the coming year will be confirmed with each client during November/December – using the booking form attached. The report format will also be agreed with the client at this time.

For all clients, a Letter of Engagement can be drawn up confirming the number of visits, cost of visits, and any other specific details. This can be used to confirm funding for PO Group purposes and also to assist in budget planning for clients. DLV Plant UK's standard terms and conditions are also attached to Letters of Engagement but can be supplied separately on request.

All invoicing for visits is carried out monthly in arrears. **Unless otherwise agreed, payment terms are strictly 30 days from invoice date.** Any deviation from these terms must be agreed between the client and the individual consultant responsible for each client beforehand.

Please note: the **minimum** visit charge is 2 hours at our standard rate, as given in the current price list.

## Laboratory Analysis/Diagnostics

A wide range of laboratory/diagnostic services available to registered clients. The following is a summary of most frequently used services and the laboratories performing these services:

(a) Nutritional Analysis	(Soil/Compost/Leaf/Water).	(NRM)
(b) Pathology Diagnostics	(Soil/ Compost/Plant/Water).	(EMR/STC/FERA)
(c) Entomology Diagnostics	(Plants/Soil).	(EMR/STC/FERA)
(d) Microbiological Analysis	(Water/Fruit).	(NRM/ILS)
(e) Pesticide Residue Analysis	(Soil/Fruit/Plants).	(EXOVA LAWLABS)

Costs and details of each individual analysis service are described below. Prices quoted include standard interpretation given by the laboratory. Further detailed written interpretation, comments and treatment recommendations, will be charged separately at our standard rate.

Invoicing for all analysis and interpretation work is done monthly in arrears.

### (a) Nutritional Analysis

All clients have access to the market leading DLV Plant UK “postage paid” laboratory analysis service - featuring easy to understand colour bar interpretation. This is carried out by NRM Ltd, a leading independent laboratory, providing a fast, accurate and cost-effective service.

The range of available services is broad but the most common analyses are as follows;

- **Soil Analysis** (Standard Agricultural or Glasshouse Soils).
- **Compost Analysis** (using European Standard - 1:5 extraction method).
- **Water/NFT Analysis** (using either raw water or feed samples).
- **Leaf Tissue Analysis** (based on oven dried sample).

A summary of NRM prices and analysis descriptions is given below:

<b>NRM CODE</b>	<b>MATERIAL</b>	<b>ANALYSIS DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>PRICE</b>
A001	Soil	Std Agricultural (pH + P, K, Mg)	£8.25
A181	Soil	Std Agricultural + Calcium	£13.25
A002	Soil	Glasshouse (As Std Ag + EC and N)	£16.50
A231	Soil	Glasshouse + Calcium	£20.50
H001	Compost	Std Compost 1 (Full Suite- except Silicon)	£18.00
H001 + 02110	Compost	Std Compost + Silicon	£30.00
BaCl2	Coir	Buffer Test (BaCl <sub>2</sub> Extraction)	£33.00
C013	Leaf	Foliar Analysis (includes Sulphur)	£19.75
L013	Water	Std Water + Bicarbonate	£19.75
L013 + 02110	Water	Std Water + Bicarbonate + Silicon	£31.25
N006 + 02114	Feed/Run Off	Std NFT + Ammonium + Bicarbonate	£23.00
N006 + 02114 + 02110	Feed/Run Off	Std NFT + Ammonium + Bicarb + Silicon	£35.00
F102	Fruit	Mineral Analysis (Full suite except Si)	£31.25
F102 + 02110	Fruit	Mineral Analysis + Silicon	£42.00
L050	Water	Microbiological Analysis	£17.00
G103	Fruit/Plant	Pesticide Screen 1	£96.00
G103	Fruit/Plant	Pesticide Screen 2	£128.00

**NB:** Other analyses (e.g. Heavy Metals or Trace Elements in soil) are available at additional cost).

All samples must be sent to the laboratory direct, using NRM analysis request forms and NRM “postage paid” packaging.

Each member of the DLV Plant UK team maintains a stock of forms/ packaging and can issue the required materials on request.

Results from NRM are e-mailed direct to the DLV Plant UK Office, within 1-3 days of receipt. These will be passed onto clients (by post/e-mail) with comments, within 1-2 working days.

**(b) Pathology/Nematode Testing of Soil/Water Samples**

For clients requiring Nematode or Verticillium Wilt testing of soils, we can supply Lab request forms for the plant clinic at East Malling Research (EMR).

Wilt testing of soils takes 5-6 weeks and costs £165-205, depending on the number of samples sent. Nematode testing of soils takes 2-7 days and costs £62.50. Postage is charged additionally at cost. Results will be forwarded directly to the client by post/e-mail and copied to a nominated DLV Plant UK advisor for further interpretation.

For Clients requiring testing of soils/compost or water for the presence of Phytophthora and/or Pythium sp., we can supply **priority** Lab request forms for Stockbridge Technology Centre (STC). The cost is £66.00 per sample and testing takes 1-2 weeks. Postage is charged additionally at cost.

Results from STC analysis are e-mailed direct to the DLV Plant UK office within 5-7 days of receipt. These will be passed onto clients (by post/e-mail) within 1-2 working days.

**(c) Pathology/Entomology Testing of Plant Samples**

For clients requiring analysis of plants for diseases (eg Wilt/Phytophthora), or nematode sp, or insect pest such as Thrips and Tarsonemid, we can supply Lab request forms for the plant clinics at East Malling Research (EMR) and Stockbridge Technology Centre (STC), or for more specialist work (e.g. Virology) to FERA (formerly, Central Science Laboratory, York).

Pest/disease diagnosis of plant samples generally takes 1-2 weeks and costs £50-£100 per sample, - depending on the work required. Results will be forwarded directly to the client by post/e-mail and copied to a nominated DLV Plant UK advisor, who can provide further detailed interpretation.

**(d) Microbiological Analysis of Irrigation Water Supplies**

We offer analysis of irrigation water for E-coli/Salmonella and other bacterial contaminants, via NRM/ILS. Growers are being increasingly required to provide evidence of microbiological analysis for audit purposes and the cost of this service is £17.00 per sample.

Postage paid envelopes, bottles and forms are available as for other NRM analysis work and results will be forwarded to clients within 10-14 days of sample receipt. (Analysis takes longer than nutrient testing, as samples must be incubated for a number of days to allow microbes to develop).

**Please note, a larger (500 ml) bottle is required for this analysis compared to nutrient testing of water (250 ml) and a different postage paid envelope is required, as this analysis takes place in Yorkshire - not NRM main laboratory in Bracknell.**

(e) **Pesticide Residue Analysis of Plant Tissue/Fruit**

NRM are offering a rapid (2-5 days), independent pesticide analysis facility for plant tissue/fruit samples, via Exova Lawlabs, who are fully accredited by UKAS. A courier pick-up is available for this service, organised on the same, or the next working day.

Pesticide screening is carried out for 9 major classes of pesticides and results presented with UK/EU/Codex MRL'S.

Results from NRM are e-mailed direct to the DLV Plant UK office within 2-5 days of receipt. These will be passed onto clients (by post/e-mail) within 24 hrs. Cost of this service is £96.00 per 500g sample (plus a £10 courier fee for less than 5 samples).

Other pesticide residue analysis packages are available on request.

### **Strawberry Flower Counts/Mapping.**

Between 1999 and 2005, Soft Fruit Solutions were able to offer flower counts (by dissection) on strawberry plants at Reading University. Unfortunately, Reading University have now terminated this service - due to staff cutbacks.

DLV Plant UK Ltd are now to offer clients an alternative strawberry flower counting service, carried out by Bert Meurs (Planta Logica), at PRI Wageningen, in Holland.

Two types of analysis are available, namely:

- **Top Flower Research** (noting position and development stage of first truss in each crown)
- **Total Mapping** (noting position and development stage of all trusses and developing buds)

The costs of these services are 14.00 Euros/plant for top flower research and 41.00 Euros/plant for total plant mapping.

Plant samples must be sent direct to Planta Logica and results will be normally be emailed back within 2-5 days of receipt.

Due to very high demand for this service, we strongly recommend that clients contact Bert Meurs before despatching samples to confirm a time slot in which the plants can be analysed.

Strawberry Flower Mapping request forms and detailed interpretation of these results can be provided by your nominated DLV Plant UK advisor via SQMS®.

## **Bespoke Tailored Nutrition Programs.**

Using our extensive and detailed knowledge of soft fruit nutrition from both the UK and Holland, we offer registered clients bespoke tailored crop nutrition plans for individual plots and/or whole farm situations.

Crop nutrition plans are devised from analysis results of soil, water, and compost samples and take into account: crop, plant type, variety, growing medium and system. All programs will be drawn up by a FACTS Registered advisor, and are issued to clients direct.

Bespoke tailored nutrition programs can be prepared for the following situations:

### **(a) Soil Grown Crops.**

- pre-plant base fertilizer/lime recommendations.
- liquid feed (fertigation) programs for trickle irrigated crops.
- solid (bag) application programs for non-trickle irrigated crops.

Nutrition programs will be formulated from results of water and soil analysis, together with information on crop type, previous cropping history and other pertinent information supplied by the client. Programs can be tailored for either a “whole farm” situation, or just for individual cropping blocks.

### **(b) Substrate Grown Crops.**

- Liquid feed programs according to crop type, variety, planting date (and density), and also substrate type (eg. Peat/Coir/Phytocell/NFT).

Substrate feed programs will be based on raw water analysis and, where necessary, chemical analysis of the substrate itself. Programs will also be tailored crop type, variety, growing system and situation (e.g. heated glasshouse/tunnels/outdoor) to ensure best possible results.

All fertilizer programs can be devised according to the customers preferred choice of fertilizer using, either straight fertilizer sources, or proprietary powder/liquid feeds.

Charges for bespoke tailored crop nutrition programs are based on the cost of laboratory analysis, plus office time spent drafting each program, charged at our standard rates. Typically, a single feed recipe for substrate grown crops will take no more than 1 hour, whereas a full on-farm program for 10-15 soil blocks may take 4-6 hours.

**Please note: This service continues to be heavily subscribed. At busy times a minimum turn around time of 14 days is likely, once analysis results and all relevant information has been assembled. During busy periods (April-August), the turn around time will rise to 14-28 days, due to extreme pressure on time.**

**In order to ensure a quick turn around, it is best to carry out analysis and provide information over the quieter winter months.**

## **“Nutri-Guide” – Whole Farm Nutrition Management Service**

Building on our extensive database of laboratory results and knowledge of soft fruit nutrition, we now offer clients the most advanced and complete nutrient management package on the market.

Using bespoke base fertilizer recipes created, as above, all individual cropping areas on the farm are logged onto a specially created Excel workbook. Following regular leaf and compost analysis according to an agreed schedule, fertilizer recipe adjustments for individual crop areas can be made and the workbook adjusted and emailed back to the client. This provides a clear and complete record of fertilizer advice and recipe changes, with no ambiguities. We successfully piloted this service with several of our larger grower clients over 2 seasons, and now offer to all our clients.

The main benefits of this package are as follows:

- clear and concise information on feed recipes for the whole farm in easy to access format
- accurate chronological information providing detailed traceability of inputs through the season
- logical and clear adjustments to feed recipes giving improved quality and yield
- significant savings in fertilizer use by eliminating unnecessary ingredients & overfeeding

The extra cost of this system is just a small one off fee for initial preparation of the workbook (usually no more than 15-30 mins at our standard rate), plus periodic updating of the workbook following sample analysis (usually v quick and no more than 15 mins work). Standard laboratory and analysis interpretation charges also apply, as detailed above.

## **Strawberry Quality Monitoring System (SQMS®)**

A unique and innovative product developed by DLV Plant BV in Holland, SQMS® is the most complete and practical crop management tool for glasshouse/tunnel grown Elsanta crops available. Many of the leading Dutch strawberry growers base their production strategy and routine growing decisions on this system. Unlike other decision support systems, SQMS® has been validated and proven in commercial practice over the past 8 years, with great success.

To participate in the scheme, clients are required to make weekly records of critical data such as average temperature, incident light levels, CO2 levels and harvesting info. Data is logged onto a client file created on the DLV/Agrimore web-based platform. To set up the file, clients also need to register their cropping details (eg plant type, density, plant date) as well as anticipated yield. From this data, the SQMS® computer model provides information on the dry matter balance of the plant and how to optimise climate control settings for maximum autumn and spring production.

The SQMS® protocol has recently been expanded to provide decision support to Autumn-Spring Elsanta cropping in cold tunnels and table tops (including Spanish tunnels). Knowledge is now being added to allow decision support on Sonata and the development of a QMS® service for Everbearing Strawberries, and Cane Fruit.

Another SQMS® model has been developed for Elsanta tray plant propagation, where information on temperature, flower and crown number and Nitrogen fertilisation are combined to optimise growing decisions on water and feed for optimum flower numbers, and determine when plants are at the ideal stage for cold storage. Virtually all leading Dutch propagators use this system and as a result have increased their crop knowledge and plant quality significantly over the past 3 years.

Charges for SQMS® are an initial set-up fee of £475/yr for setting up the registration files on the Agrimore/DLV web-based platform. Time spent by the advisor interpreting data is charged at our standard rates.

Additionally, clients can subscribe to a weekly SQMS® email, providing detailed information on climate control, cultural and husbandry advice for glasshouse grown strawberries and propagation of Tray Plants. The cost of this service is an additional £350/yr for 52 issues.

This information is provided by DLV Plant BV Strawberry Team in Holland, but an English translation is available.

## **Plant Material Sourcing.**

Procuring the best quality plant material is critical in the success of any soft fruit enterprise but in practice, is often difficult to achieve. DLV Plant UK can help take the headache out of plant material sourcing in the following ways:

### **(a) Assistance in plant selection**

After discussion on the most appropriate types of plant and suppliers, one or more of the DLV Plant Advisory Team can visit (either with client, or on the client's behalf) selected plant material suppliers - both in the U.K. and overseas. We will then assist the client in ordering the best plants for the job.

Using our extensive contacts in Holland, we are able to access local knowledge and background information on plant production and help bring grower clients and plant suppliers in closer more regular contact.

### **(b) QC Check on Plants in Store/On-Farm**

Having made a choice, we will then "follow up" with visits to the plant supplier to physically check and Q.C. the plants in store - prior to despatch. In this way, we will be able to monitor the grading, health, and well being of plants during the storage cycle and ensure that the correct grade of plant arrives on farm, in the best possible condition.

We are also able to train growers and farm staff in physically checking plants as they arrive on farm, in order to ensure that there have been no hiccups during storage and transport.

The charge for this service will be based on the amount of time spent working with or on behalf of the client at our normal visiting rates. Quotations can be given beforehand as and when required.

### **Strawberry Planting Tools/Soil Corers.**

We continue to offer high quality mild steel planting tools for trouble free, precision planting of bare root strawberry planting stock into soil/substrate. Cost of planting tools is as follows:

1 - 9 tools	=	£5.50 each
10 - 20 tools	=	£5.30 each
21+ tools	=	£5.00 each

A small stock of planting tools is always carried, but large orders (12 or more) are made to order and a lead time of 7-10 days is required. Postage is charged at cost.

We also offer high quality, virtually indestructible soil corers made from stainless steel, for sample taking and moisture assessment of cropping beds. The price of these tools is £70.00 each + postage.

A small stock of soil corers is always carried but for orders of 5 or more, a lead-time of 10-14 days is required.

### **Magnifying Lenses/Microscopes**

We also maintain a stock of pocket sized x 20 Magnifying Lenses – ideal for identification of pests such as Thrips/Tarsonemid and Spider and in the field. These are priced at £27.50 each. Postage is charged at cost.

### **Special Events/Training Courses**

Over the course of the year we plan to organise several special events, exclusive to DLV Plant UK clients, including:

- Visits to UK propagators and fruit growers.
- Visits to Dutch/Belgian propagators and fruit growers.
- Training Workshops/Seminars using UK and Dutch based advisors.

We will circulate clients nearer to the time with details of costs and itineraries. These events are usually well attended and as places are always limited, early booking is essential.

### **Costings/Reports/Other Technical Information**

We are frequently asked to provide clients with detailed costings info, letters of support for planning applications, or technical reports to assist in insurance claims. This we are more than happy to do but we make a charge based on the time spent preparing and distributing this information.

Typically, a short report or letter of support takes 1-2 hours to prepare and our standard rate for this type of work would apply. More detailed information would be charged at the same rate but can take 2-6 hours, depending on client requirements.