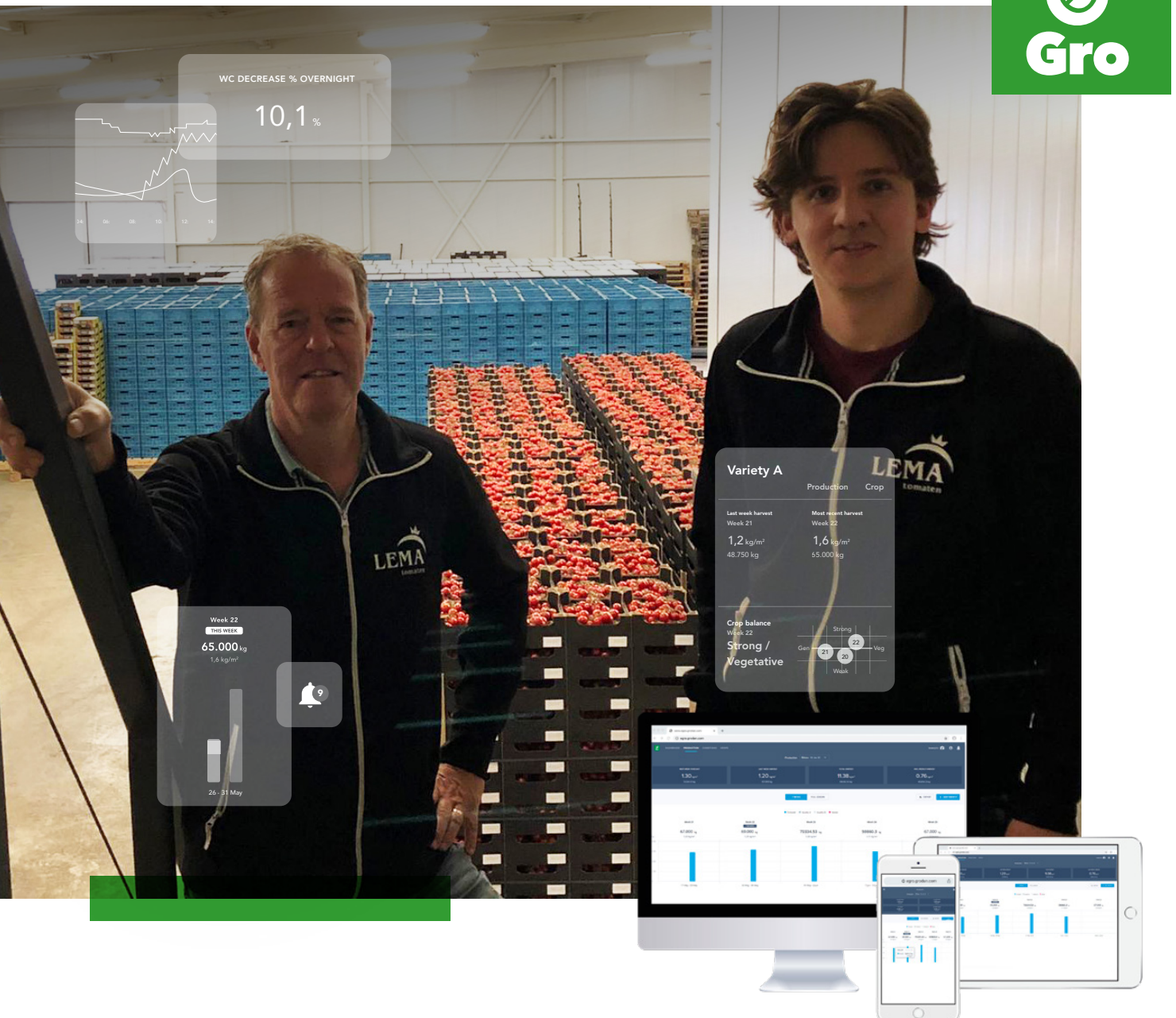


Data-driven cultivation with e-Gro at LEMA

Growing tomatoes for future techies



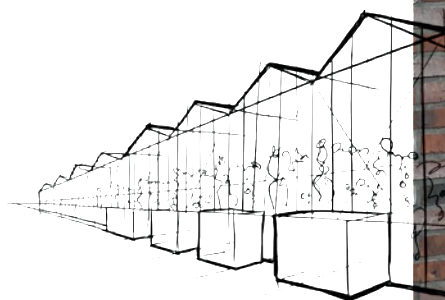
Mention the name LEMA from Naaldwijk - part of Prominent - and most people immediately think of Rob van Marrewijk and Ruud Leerdam's cocktail tomatoes (Brioso). Since the beginning of 2019, the experienced growers have been working with e-Gro, Grodan's software platform for data-driven Precision Growing. They even employ a passionate, specialized technician for this: Kenny van Dijk.

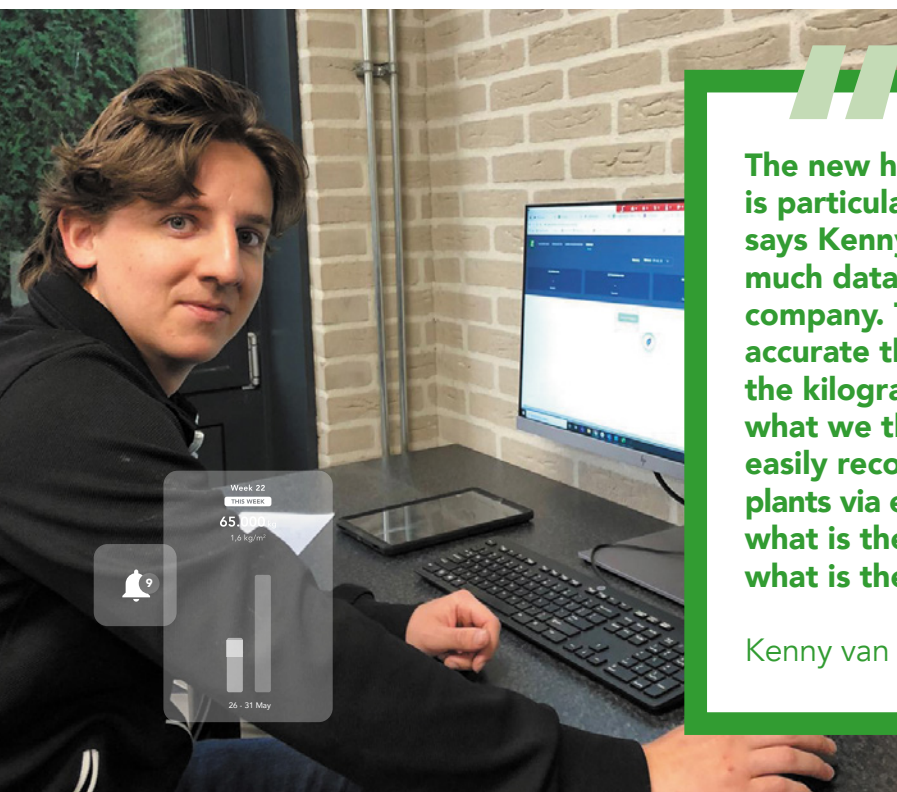
Fast followers

Rob van Marrewijk and Ruud Leerdam have always been progressive tomato growers at the core. Typical go-getters. The start of their collaboration in 2006 was established as a response to the many technological developments within their field, which demanded serious increases in scale among growers.

Rob, with his own company covering 14,000 square meters, consulted colleague Ruud (12,000 square meters) who also grew his cocktail tomatoes at Prominent. Not much later LEMA was born. "Ruud takes care of our energy usage and labor, and I focus on the cultivation," says Rob. "We don't have to be the front runner, but we do like to be fast followers."

This is evident from how LEMA is open to data-driven cultivation via e-Gro, which they have been working with for almost two years. This program from Grodan provides more insight into crop growth so that growers can make better and faster cultivation decisions. "Data is the future," says Rob. "We want to participate with LEMA and since November 2019 we have even hired a young enthusiastic technician for this: Kenny. He once started here as a side job when he was a thirteen-year-old student, but now he is 29 and has fully grown with us and within the company."





The new harvest forecasting module is particularly special within e-Gro, says Kenny. "We use this to map as much data as possible within our company. The more input, the more accurate the outcome. We enter all the kilograms we harvest, including what we throw away. We can also easily record everything about our plants via e-Gro's harvest registration: what is the length of the leaf and what is the growth?"

Kenny van Dijk

Everything in one glance with e-Gro

"To have the opportunity, as a starting grower, to set up the entire data side within a company like LEMA is incredibly interesting," says Kenny proudly. "A big realization for me was when I understood how you can measure the water in your growing media via GroSens. By linking your substrate to your computer and e-Gro, you can see everything at a glance. The data system also immediately shows our climate, crop and production data."

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Water content text message alerts

"We process this information in e-Gro, which calculates the harvest forecast," says Rob. "Then it becomes clear what we have to do two or three weeks later. And besides the harvest module, you can also calculate your water supply via e-Gro: when should you water your crops and how much exactly?" Kenny: "I suddenly receive a text message: pay attention to your water content. Super helpful!"

The horticultural world is changing rapidly but not only in a negative way. Rob: "In the past these were all family businesses, but the number of horticulture family businesses is decreasing. The profession in general is also changing. I think it is even improving. As a grower you are no longer a typical horticulturist who has to do everything by yourself: the cultivation, the auctioning, and also the administration somewhere in the evening. Nowadays as a specialist you can really become an important part of a large company. That makes the horticultural company also interesting for young people with a good education."

Growing for university "techies"

Take Kenny for example who studied public administration at university. "In the past, if you went to university you really wouldn't go into the horticultural business," says Rob. "Now you can. Our world requires the latest techniques and innovations, as we do with e-Gro. It's very inspiring for the "techies" among us." Kenny: "With the right digital expertise in your pocket, you can - if you do it right - together with other like-minded people, establish a serious top company in this industry."

Because of their clear dedication to "tech" at LEMA, they hope to also be an example for the future of cultivation. Rob: "Through our way of working we want to get as many young people as possible enthusiastic about our beautiful profession. Because it is. I am of a different generation than Kenny, but when I see with e-Gro what is possible in cultivation nowadays, I also get enthusiastic."



"It's still teamwork," says Kenny. "Ultimately, I need the knowledge of Rob and Ruud. Of course I can't just read everything from the computer."

Rob: "You always have to keep looking at the plant ..."

Kenny: "It shouldn't be that I look at the computer to see if the sun is shining outside, haha."

Anyone can grow with data"

What is Rob and Kenny's tip for colleagues who may still have doubts about data-driven cultivation such as e-Gro? Kenny: "I would try it for a month regardless. Anyone can do it, really. You just fill in all the numbers. And soon you will notice whether it is something for your company. Cultivation without a computer is outdated. Aren't we all already on the climate computer? The next step to creating a database is actually not that big."

"You notice that at first some growers are afraid to provide their data," says Rob. "Because they think their data is worth money. But that data only becomes worth money if you bring it together and draw the right conclusions from it. You won't get there anymore by keeping data only to yourself."

Kenny: "I can hardly wait to fully master this data-driven cultivation. I am really proud to be part of this project together with LEMA and e-Gro. The whole world is digitizing and we, as growers, ultimately have to go along with that."



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