

Press Release

For Immediate Release: 10 January 2007

TRIALS SHOW SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN ESTABLISHMENT AND SOFT FRUIT PRODUCTION

A crop protection business has demonstrated that Plocher products significantly improve crop establishment and improve fruit quality, shelf life and yield, in trials published today.

Blue Xylem, Crop Protection Specialists demonstrated that Plocher products significantly improve leaf, basal and stem growth when incorporated into the protocol for strawberries.

The trials took place on seven sites, with five using the recommended Plocher protocol, and the remainder using a different protocol. Application of Plocher products was only implemented as a six-week establishment programme in 2006 to introduce the Plocher product range to growers and demonstrate the potential of using Plocher products in the field.

All sites received weak plant stock in need of boosting and support. In the Plocher trial sites, plant growth and strength was improved, and root production was enhanced. Untreated fields of more mature plant material showed far slower extension growth than in Plocher-treated beds.

Yield increases of up to 22% were demonstrated, although the average across all sites was 9%. Six out of seven sites had an improvement in fruit quality and firmness. Shelf-life improved across all trial sites, showing an increase between 5% and 24%. The average shelf-life improvement with the use of Plocher products was 12%.

On site 3, where there was no improvement in yield, 85% of plants reached cropping stage and Class One Grade increased by 3% with the use of Plocher products, while fruit firmness increased by 5%, and shelf life improved by 5%.

Site 4 experienced the most dramatic improvements. Compared with untreated fields, Plocher-treated crops showed a 22% increase in yield, 20% less disease and were able to reduce their spray programme. Quality increased by 18%, fruit firmness improved by 19% and shelf-life increased by 24%.

On site 5, the crop showed no signs of growth for the first six weeks. By harvest, plants had built large crowns, looked healthy and vibrant. Approximately 30% plant loss was anticipated but eventual plant loss was only 3%, whilst there was a 10% increase in yield and quality. Fruit firmness improved by 9% and shelf-life showed a 13% increase.

Crop loss on sites 6 and 7 were also reduced where Plocher was incorporated. At site 6, Plocher-treated plants suffered a 20% loss compared to 28% loss on untreated, and at site 7, conventional crops suffered a 7% loss whereas Plocher-treated plant losses were 5%.

When asked about the potential of Plocher products in the soft fruit market, David Austen of Blue Xylem stated, "The work we have undertaken to date demonstrates that Plocher products have a strong effect on root and top growth. To achieve optimum results, the manufacturers recommend that the products are used regularly throughout the growing period. They state that it becomes possible to significantly reduce nutritional programmes because soil fertility improves. In addition, stronger and healthier plant growth enables crops to grow through most diseases."

David continues, "By using the soil improvement products pre-planting or at planting, and strengthening and vitalising products during crop development, we are simply strengthening the protective armoury that growers already use. As many chemical ingredients will be withdrawn over the next five years, Plocher can provide an effective and economical alternative."

Charlotte Wilson of Swift Nature, UK Distributors of Plocher products, said, "Plocher products are used by strawberry growers in many countries around the world, including France, Germany, Austria, Canada. It is critical that we maintain the English strawberry as being the best in the world, and Plocher products will help to ensure this remains the case."

|

For further information about Plocher products and to place orders, contact Charlotte Wilson, Swift Nature, PO Box 2222, Buckingham MK18 6WZ, 01280 822 188, www.swiftnature.co.uk

For further information about Blue Xylem, contact David Austen on 07881 912715.

NOTES

Swift Nature is the sole UK importer of Plocher products.

Plocher products are made from totally natural carrier materials, including molasses, magnesium sulphate, calcium carbonate and dolomite. They are vitalised or energised with specific properties to activate and accelerate natural re-balancing in the environment they are treating, whether that is a soil (including manures and slurries), plants or water.

The choice of carrier material depends on its chemical and physical suitability within the usage area and has an influence on the efficacy of the products.

Plocher products continuously and permanently transfer the specific properties endowed upon them to their immediate environment. So, for instance, when you add a product to water, the energy of oxygen and other properties held in the powder or liquid are transferred to the water. When sprayed across the treatment area these properties are transferred and stimulate aerobic biological processes.

Created in Germany by Roland Plocher 25 years ago, Plocher products have made a positive contribution to improved health and energy efficiency in soils and crops around the world. Plocher products are approved for use by EU Organic Agriculture 2092/91 EWG. They are not described as organic or biological, but as bio-dynamic because they create a beneficial environment in which aerobic microbial activity thrives.

|

The Plocher protocols used were

5 sites

- 1 application of 200g/ha Plocher Soil Activator two weeks post planting
- 3 weekly applications of 300ml/ha Plocher Plant Strengthener

2 sites

- Weeks 1-3 weekly applications of 300ml/ha Plocher Plant Strengthener
- Weeks 4-6 weekly applications of 200g/ha Plocher Plant Vitaliser
- Weeks 7-9 weekly applications of 200g/ha Plocher Plant Protector

Recommended Plocher protocol:

- 1 application of 200g/ha Plocher Soil Activator two weeks pre-planting or during planting
- Fortnightly applications of 200ml/ha Plocher Plant Strengthener throughout growing season
- After harvest, 1 application of 100g/ha Plocher Soil Activator
- When plant growth is weak or diseased, use 200g/ha Plocher Plant Vitaliser