



Double spray boom for both irrigation and crop protection

A spray boom is used in greenhouses for the following two reasons. Firstly, for watering and secondly, for crop protection. With the rise of biological agents, greenhouse spraying has become more labour-intensive: one has to apply agents more often. Add to this the decline in specialist knowledge, and growers will have to look for alternatives in automation. Hortimec has a solution for this: a double spray boom that can be used for both irrigation and pesticide application. Hendrik Mast, managing director of Hortimec, tells us more about it.



Hendrik Mast at FNK Youngplants in front of their spray boom

Hendrik: "We supply a system where each canopy has its own robot with spray booms. This means you don't have to keep moving the robot from hood to hood, and you also have much less pressure loss because the hose is fixed in the hood and not in a reel."

Water savings

An advantage of the spray booms, which are only used when growing young plants (where light loss through the boom is irrelevant), besides the labour aspect is that they save more water. "Normally you water so much that everything is continuously under, but with a spray boom you give the plants just enough water, never too much. That way you avoid wastage," Hendrik explains.

"All the plants also get equal amounts of water that way. You give a little every day, and you avoid overwatering the plants in the middle or getting 'dry edges'. As a result, you need to sort less, and you can better predict emergence."



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UV-C, cameras and misters

A spray boom does more than just apply water and agents. In fact, it is also possible to hang UV-C lamps on the booms, which can help control mildew and other pests. "To control mildew, those lights need to be on a few hours after sunset, and a few hours before sunrise. We can programme those functions, and an app can be used to control the spray booms," Hendrik says.

The booms can also be a solution for growers who want to work with cameras to detect pests, but cannot install a drone system in the greenhouse. In that case, they can hang cameras on the spray booms, which can 'dry' back and forth to detect pests. "So you can set up all kinds of things, including misters, to cool," he says.

Own propagation

As described, spray booms are widely used in the propagation of young plants. Abroad, it is already commonplace to have in-house propagation in addition to production, but it is also increasingly happening in the Netherlands. Hendrik therefore sees opportunities for Hortimec's booms, which are also adjustable in both width and length; one can steer per zone or compartment. "That's nice for the grower, because growers increasingly have specific requirements."

For more information:

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