

A concerted contribution to solving global issues

The seeds and young plants sector has more than 250 Dutch companies. Every day, these companies are busy improving crops in agriculture and horticulture in a broad sense. They produce seeds, seed potatoes, bulbs, cuttings and young plants that provide answers to changing circumstances. This concerns new wishes from growers, the processing industry, traders and consumers, but also important social developments.

Population growth results in an increasing demand for healthy, plant-based food worldwide. Climate change makes sustainable production of this food increasingly important. Dutch breeding and propagation companies are indispensable partners in resolving these types of global issues. The sector therefore offers an attractive working environment: it is socially relevant, innovative and international.

New, improved plant varieties contribute to solutions for several social issues:

POPULATION GROWTH

In 2050, the world population will be 9 billion people. Productive varieties with good harvest security contribute to ensuring that all these people have sufficient, good-quality food. Improving the shelf life of fresh products also contributes to less waste.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate zones are shifting, the weather is becoming more unpredictable. Crops must be resistant to new diseases and pests and more extreme weather conditions, such as drought, torrential rain and extreme temperatures.

SALINISATION

Each year, one and a half million hectares of high-quality agricultural land is lost due to salinisation. Some of this land can still be used for salt-tolerant crops.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Many people follow unhealthy diets. Attractive fruit and vegetables and crops with high nutritional values can

help reverse this development. Flowers and plants also contribute to general well-being and air quality indoors and in the city.

URBANISATION

To provide people in cities with high-quality food, harvested products must have a longer shelf life. Another solution is vertical agriculture in the city. This efficient cultivation method requires adapted varieties. Green spaces in the city are also becoming increasingly important for the urban environment. Sports fields with natural grass can also contribute to this.

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

The development of more sustainable cultivation methods requires adapted varieties and young plants. Many crops still depend on the use of chemical plant protection products. Natural resistance to diseases and pests and guaranteed disease-free seeds and young plants can reduce this. Initial targeted treatment ensures that the performance of the seed is optimised.

GREENING OF THE INDUSTRY

At times, the industry puts heavy pressure on the environment. Plant-based renewable raw materials can reduce this environmental pressure and contribute to a circular economy.

DIVERSITY AND CHOICE

Biodiversity is important for various aspects of sustainability. In Europe, plant breeding contributes to the genetic diversity of crops in the field and to greater choice for growers and product diversity for consumers.



For instance, the variety of tomatoes on sale has grown enormously in the past 20 years. The growing diversity of vegetables and ornamental plants increases the choice for customers and enables new applications.

CHALLENGING WORK ENVIRONMENT

Sharing knowledge is essential for major international issues. Dutch companies therefore work intensively with a large number of knowledge institutions at home and abroad. The sector is also known for its innovative power. On average, companies invest approximately 15% of their turnover in research and development. Dutch breeding and propagation companies are present in more than 100 countries.

The sector currently offers more than 14,000 mostly highly qualified jobs in the Netherlands. Those who work with seeds and young plants face interesting challenges every day, and that is unlikely to decrease. In the coming years, the sector will operate even more internationally and social problems will require increasingly urgent solutions.