

3 steps to ensure a new harvest

The 2021 campaign begins now. In winter 3 steps: pulverisation, ridging, mulching are all to be carried out.

In the autumn, when the foliage turns yellow, the sugars synthesized by the plant are redirected towards the crown. Pulverisation should be undertaken when the soil temperature at the crown is below 10 degrees Celsius. Warning - pulverising too early can lead to a resumption of activity of the crown and new spears shooting.

To achieve early, straight, rusty-free and good quality asparagus, the ridge needs to be well draining with an excellent soil structure over the whole profile.

Warning - pulverising too early can lead to a resumption of activity of the crown and new spears shooting.



For this 3 steps are to be carried out

1 pulverise when all the foliage is dry and the temperature of the soil at the plateau is below 10 degrees

2 ridge-up from mid-November when the soil is well dried out which allows for an excellent structure: during the ridging process avoid incorporating into the ridge any foliage from the previous vegetation (rust, twisted and split asparagus)

3 Cover the ridge immediately after the ridging process in order to maintain its good structure: when the ridging is done very early, it is possible to use the black/white mulch film, white side out-most in order to limit its warming too prematurely and to achieve the correct temperature necessary for the plant.

Apply black/white mulch right from the ridging to limit soil heating.



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Probes in the ridge

Temperature measurement is essential before and during harvest. Probes can help to get to know it and manage it better.

Before

To measure hours of cold that ensure good reserves generating an early harvest, good calibre and high yield.

During

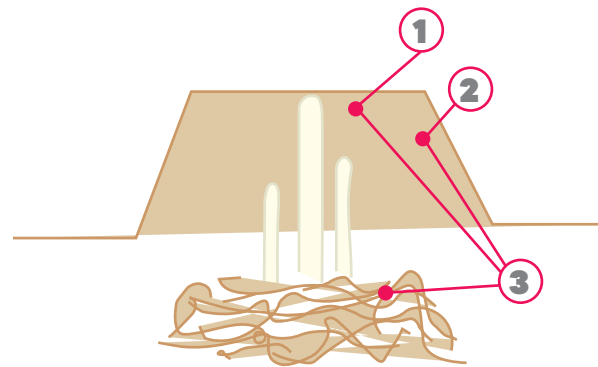
Knowing the temperature at the plateau level will help manage the daily volumes harvested: 1 additional degree = +30 kg/ha per day in low temperatures.

The management of mulching can be planned for up to 3 days in advance depending on current weather data but also thanks to the weather forecasts (see Asparagus World No.2).



Managing the temperature well

- 1** at the top of the ridge - avoid the burning of the tips emerging from the ground
- 2** in the centre of the mound - to obtain good quality especially in terms of the quality of the tip (closed point)
- 3** on the 3 levels: plateau, centre, top - to obtain maximum yields while avoiding the flowering of asparagus as well as burnt tips



MANAGING THE TEMPERATURE WELL

Equipment

2 types of probes offer the same service as Bosch⁽¹⁾ during the asparagus harvest:

- Challenge Agriculture with its Watermark probes offers the same services as Bosch with year-round irrigation management at 3 or 4 depths
- CoRHIZE and its capacitive probe offers the same services as Challenge and also tracks NO3 and K in the ground

(1) The Bosch Asparagus Monitoring service is taken over by FoundersLane GmbH from January 1, 2021.



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Plan ahead for a **good transplanting**

A good implantation of the crop comes from using good quality crowns or transplants. It is now time to order them for future transplantings.

The implantation of an asparagus crop can be done using different parts of the asparagus: the transplant, the crown and more rarely using the seed. To be sure of availability of the varieties, in the quantity and quality of the desired transplants, it is imperative to order the crowns one year before transplanting. Delivery of transplants usually takes about 4 months from ordering. For many of you, now is the time to ask yourselves the question.

Choosing a good crown

The transplant and the crown come about as a combination of the creativity of the breeder who gives the genetic potential to the variety and of the know-how



of the nurseryman who accumulates the energy of the transplant in the crown or transplant. The calibre of the crown facilitates recovery and ensures the emergence of the first stems. Equally as important as the weight, the regularity of weight of the batch of crowns counts towards facilitating transplanting (especially with high densities) and ensuring the homogeneity of the plot to come. A good crown is one with a spread plateau, balanced to facilitate its future development and a large number of spears, on average of 5 to 7 (variable depending on the varieties). Stocky crowns can also facilitate machine transplanting and/or their installation during high-density transplanting (8 to 9



The Transplant can make up for a lack of crown availability. Additionally it sometimes makes choosing varieties easier or makes it easier to order later. The soil plug also allows for planting in growing condition. It can also make it easier to plant in heavy soil. Nursery owners already have a supply of transplants and some are offering a variety of soil plugs.

Asparagus crowns

offered to professionals weigh at least 40 grams. Some nurseries even offer several categories of crowns depending on the weight of 40–70g and 70g+, which also correspond to categories A and A+. The crowns are soaked in an antifungal treatment, except those destined for the organic market for which there is now a specific supply of organic transplants.



crowns per linear meter). On receipt, if the batches are heterogeneous it is important to sort the crowns according to the calibre to avoid fatal competition to the smallest crowns that wither after a few years (2 to 3 years after planting).

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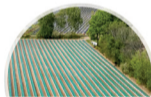
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TECHNOLOGY



Innovations from **plastic film** manufacturers

The use of plastic cover films has brought asparagus cultivation into a new area. Manufacturers are offering many options and innovations.

The use of plastic, thermal and black/white films is primarily a way to improve the yields of an asparagus, but they can also be used to modify the impact of climatic conditions (see boxed text).

Managing the temperature of the ridge using films

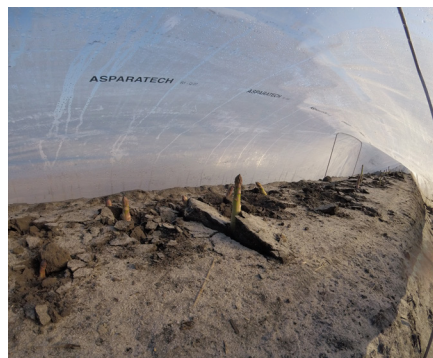
The data provided by Engels Machines shows that it is possible to regulate the temperature of the ridge by managing the different plastics and their positioning. Taking 100 as a base for the mini-tunnel+black plastic configuration, there is a decreasing gradient of the thermal effect of different combinations.

In any case, the white face reduces the thermal effect of the sun the most (base 10) but it cannot be said to cool the ridge. This management of the various plastic covers can be carried out during the harvest with the aid of machines without extra working time. Given the strategic importance of plastic films, manufacturers have expanded their range with increasingly specific and technical films. The thickness of the films increases mainly due to the direction in which it is placed onto the arch.



Daios

According to Daios, when placed perpendicularly the film requires to be of a thickness of 50 microns to ensure its maintenance. On the other hand, a film placed parallel to the arch must have a thickness of 70 microns. But the covering and uncovering of films placed perpendicular to the arches increases harvest time by 30%. To get around this, some manufacturers offer "compromise solutions" between precocity and ease of use by welding together a black/white pocket plastic film and a thermal plastic film.



Europlastic

According to Europlastic, the manufacturer of this film, the thermal film is enriched with UV stabilizers in order to increase its lifespan and make it equivalent to the black/white film. The two associated films also stand up better to manipulation which extends the life of the cover.



Reyenvas

Reyenvas offers in its range, a 7 layer film thanks to the technology of interspersing a thermal layer into the black-white film. Thicker (175 microns) and more resistant, its lifespan will be extended to provide a partial solution to the problem of plastic recycling. Plastics are also becoming more discreet. For this reason, manufacturers such as Daios and Reyenvas offer green/white films to better integrate into the landscape.

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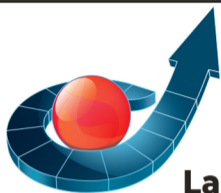
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Faced with Covid **prevent and protect**

Some Advice on 3 levels.

It's hard to predict the future, but the risk of a third wave of Covid is looming. Could it happen during the 2021 season, as it did in 2020? A few precautions are necessary in order to welcome employees onto farms as safely as possible.

1/ Recruitment and deployment of employees

- It is desirable to recruit workers of several nationalities in order to avoid the risk of closed borders. In 2020, for example, borders with Eastern European countries were closed for a while, whereas the border was open with Spain
- Prepare and send employment contracts that will allow the free movement of harvesters for the whole journey from their home to the workplace: requirement: covid test or the vaccine required before departure.



Compliance with barrier measures and health regulations must be in effect throughout the production chain.



The individual packaging was acclaimed in spring 2020.

2/ Receiving employees onto the farm

- Compliance with barrier measures and health regulations must be in effect throughout the production chain: at the farm, during transport, on the plot, in the packaging station, in the accommodation

3/ For marketing

- limit bulk, favour recyclable individual packaging
- strengthen the relationship between producer and consumer if you market yourself: communication, drive, home delivery or grouped

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Germany's 2020 asparagus season **a mixed bag**

BY MICHAEL KOCH, AGRARMARKT INFORMATIONS-GESELLSCHAFT MBH, AMI

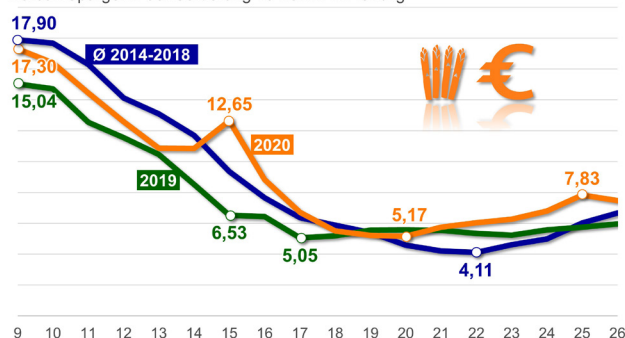
The COVID-19 crisis certainly made Germany's 2020 asparagus season one to remember. There was some concern at the start, and lots of challenges, but all in all, the season went better than expected. On the one hand, the pandemic meant that for long stretches, the hospitality sector ceased to be the important source of demand it usually is for asparagus. But on the other hand, a labour shortage meant it wasn't possible to harvest all the asparagus fields anyway. Combined with an increase in purchases by German households, the result was a fairly stable market, one in which asparagus cost consumers more than it did the previous year. In April, the average price for asparagus at retail was 9.09 €/kg, which was 29% higher than in the same month in 2019. In May it was 7.61 €/kg and in

June 8.01 €/kg, which in both cases was 17% more respective to the same months last year. Thanks mainly to the higher prices, but also due to increased consumer purchases in April and May, the consumer spend on asparagus rose to its highest level for the last six years, which was about 30% above that of the previous year. Though prices didn't fall as far as they did in the past two years during supermarket promotions, the retail buyers made no concessions during negotiations, despite growers highlighting the fact that production costs have risen. In the end, it's a free market and if it allows retailers to buy asparagus at a certain price, they will. But irrespective of the pandemic, the fundamental issue remains – is that price enough for the long term and sustainable production of asparagus in Germany?

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Quelle: AMI, BLE

FURTHER RESTRICTION OF THE YIELD AREA

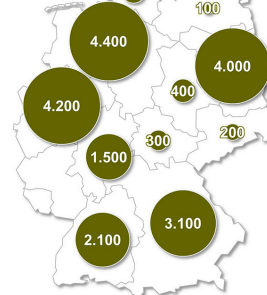
Weitere Einschränkung der Ertragsfläche

Ertragsflächen 2020

in ha

insgesamt:

21.900 ha



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Marktversorgung in 1.000 t



Quelle: Destatis

- (1) Yield area 2020 in ha (totally: 21.900 ha)
- (2) Market supply in 1.000 t (Domestic production/Imports)
- (3) Asparagus area in 1.000 ha (including new plantations)

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Asparagus sector in difficulty in Peru

**Fears about
effect of farm
worker pay
reform in Peru**



As farm workers protest for better working conditions in Peru, the Peruvian Institute of Asparagus and Vegetables (IPEH) has raised concerns that too big an increase in their minimum pay would have many negative effects on the asparagus sector. The country's Congress is understood to have repealed an old farm law under which labourers often received very low salaries but debate is continuing on its replacement, specifically a clause around higher base salaries for them. In a statement dated December 17, IPEH said

a call by some legislators to increase the base salary by up to 50% would drive up producer costs and force them to re-evaluate their investments. It said this could result in the disappearance of about 625 small asparagus producers as they wouldn't be able to afford to pay for labour, and nearly 50 medium and large producers would disappear because they would no longer be competitive. Such a major contraction of Peru's asparagus industry, and the consequent loss of wages, would have flow-on effects including increased poverty in rural areas and the loss of over 9,000 ha of asparagus, which would mean a 75 000 tonnes drop (worth over US \$230 million FOB) in Peru's asparagus export capacity, IPEH estimates.



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**An increase in the minimum wage
would have many negative effects
on the asparagus sector and the loss
of over 9,000 ha of asparagus.**