

Prominent, The Netherlands Closed greenhouse

Prominent is a grower association which consists of 22 growers. All members of the association grow different varieties of tomatoes on the vine and the total acreage of the association is 189 hectares.

Prominent itself has three companies: DC Prominent, which is a packing station, and two greenhouses - Prominent Groeneweg I and Prominent Groeneweg II.



Prominent Groeneweg I:

Prominent I was built in 2003 and uses the latest hi-tech in greenhouse cultivation. The greenhouse was built according to the so called 'GroenlabelKas' standards, which means that the greenhouse adheres to all environmental specifications in terms of energy, lights, fertilisers and crop protection.



The company uses biological crop protection techniques, which means that natural enemies of pests are being used to protect crops. Bumblebees are used to pollinate tomato flowers.

Equally important is the working environment for the employees. Automated sorting equipment, which automatically pick boxes off trolleys and stack them on pallets, helps to create a work friendly environment. Additionally, the tomato plants are grown in gutters. These can be lowered or raised to always be at the ideal height for employees so that they don't need to bend down when they are working.

Prominent Groeneweg II:

Prominent Groeneweg II is the newest location for Prominent. Construction of the greenhouse started in 2006 and the first batch of tomatoes on the vine started growing in October of the same year.

Prominent Groeneweg II is a greenhouse that has been built according to the 'closed greenhouse' principle.

The aim of the closed greenhouse is to use the greenhouse as an energy source. In a traditional greenhouse the windows are opened during the summer to get rid of the extra heat. In the closed greenhouse this doesn't happen, instead this extra heat is stored in the ground in aquifers to be used in the winter to heat up the greenhouse. Cold water from another aquifer is used in the summer to cool down the greenhouse.

The biggest environmental gains include a reduction in the use of fossil fuels like natural gas (-20 per cent) and a lower emission of greenhouse gasses. The system of climate control optimises production conditions resulting in higher yields and higher quality of the product. The residual heat is used to heat nearby homes.



'Growth lights' are also being used. These are electric lamps designed to promote plant growth by emitting an electromagnetic spectrum appropriate for photosynthesis.