

Important visitor in Noordoostpolder



Nearly a hundred crop farmers and other interested people, from seven different countries, were present at the working visit of the American agricultural expert Neal Kinsey, who is well-known for the Kinsey-Albrecht method. Kinsey (70) gave a two-day seminar, called “Fertile Soil”, in Nunspeet and concluded his visit to the Netherlands with a field trip to Noordoostpolder. “My message to Dutch crop farmers is the same as that to crop farmers in other countries: look after the soil.”

The main focus should be on the soil. That is the ruling principle of Kinsey's philosophy. His method is promoted in our country mainly by Marco van Gulp, the initiator of N-xt Soil Services, which is part of N-xt Fertilizers. It is therefore because of his initiative that this important visitor came to Noordoostpolder that Thursday afternoon. “Kinsey is a soil and fertilizer expert known all over the world. I’m therefore very proud that Neal and also Bob Perry and his daughter Meagan, the owners of the Perry Agricultural Laboratory in Missouri, came to the

Netherlands to share their knowledge and also gain new experiences with our cultivation methods and mechanization.”

Van Woerkom: “Important task for crop farming sector”

Kinsey himself wanted to be informed in particular about the core issues in the Netherlands during the field trip to crop farmer Arnold van Woerkom in Bant. In the field shed, Van Woerkom talked about the decision he took nearly twenty years ago to grow only crops that contribute to a healthy body. “Recent research at the University of Minnesota – in Neal Kinsey’s home country – reveals that 85% of illnesses contracted by humans is food related. Those working in the crop farming sector therefore have the very important task to grow and supply healthy – nutritious – food. Partly thanks to the Kinsey-Albrecht method I now know which buttons to press to achieve that goal.”



Practical implementation

Van Woerkom continues: “The key point is to feed the soil at the right time with the right ingredients. We do this by using the products and advice based on the soil analyses of N-xt Soil Services, but we also stopped ploughing many years ago and we apply the principle that we don’t dig in any uncomposted organic matter.

The manure we grow after the potatoes have been lifted is finely cut, and is then simply left lying on the soil. In our experience this gives the soil life an enormous boost.”

Neal Kinsey: “There is huge variety in crops in the Netherlands”

Kinsey was clearly impressed by Van Woerkom's story and recognized much of his vision in the cultivation method used by the crop grower from Bant. “Most people go abroad to visit a city or to go to the beach, but I visit the countryside. I’m immensely proud to see that crop growers in the Netherlands realize that the soil is the start of everything: without good, healthy soil you can't grow healthy products. Something else I’ve noticed is the huge variety in crops. In America we’ve got huge fields with just one crop variety. Here you see small fields (by American standards, ed.) with different crops. That contributes enormously to the biodiversity, which again has a quality-improving effect on the products that are harvested.”

“Healthier plants result in a healthier body”

The soil and fertilizer expert from Missouri is the only surviving adviser to have worked with Dr. William Albrecht, who is regarded as the founder of soil fertility management. Kinsey: “I feel honoured that I’m able to share my knowledge with crop farmers throughout the world. We try to help farmers improve the conditions in which they work. As a consequence, the value of the crops not only rises in financial terms, but in particular in terms of nutritional value. Healthier plants ultimately result in a healthier human body. I feel encouraged to find that the Netherlands – and actually the whole of Western Europe – is already focusing enormously on soil quality and quality in general. Together with New Zealand it is taking the lead in the world.”

Farmers’ knowledge

According to Kinsey, that focus is not linked to the Kinsey-Albrecht soil analysis. According to the American there are several roads that lead to Rome: “We can always learn from each other, if we have the courage to look around and are

willing to learn from others. Each grower has their own way of optimizing the crop. Crop farmers can learn an awful lot from each other by looking at the solutions and innovations developed by their colleagues. This is not linked to a specific method or study, but comes from farmers' knowledge gained in practice. It's not about wanting to be different from someone else; what is important is that you're always open to the vision and opinion of a colleague. That's the only way you can improve your knowledge of the processes taking place in and above the soil. This then also enables you to produce better and healthier crops. The Kinsey-Albrecht method gives you pointers that help achieve that goal, but doesn't rule out any other methods in advance. The better we treat our soil, the better this is for the crop and for us. This means that the soil needs to be fed, as otherwise it can't feed the plant. I can see that this vision is also increasingly embraced here in the Netherlands and that people realize that high yields and quality can go hand in hand, but here too the real, large-scale change still has to begin."

Hectic days

Following an explanation about the soil composition in Noordoostpolder and a presentation about the soil on the basis of a large profile pit, Kinsley returned to his hotel, from where he would return to the airport and fly back home to Missouri the next morning. The official part is over, and that is a great relief to organizer Marco van Gurp: "I think the Masterclass and this field trip were an enormous success. We've had three hectic days, but it's definitely been worth doing."