

The Three “E’s” of Greenhouse Production

Let’s face it—these are difficult times. Businesses are failing, suppliers are closing their doors. We want you to know that we’re here for the long haul—and we’re making sure we will be by investing in the Three “E’s” of greenhouse production (remember the 3 R’s from elementary school?) ... Energy, Efficiency, and Eco-friendly.

Energy Jolly Farmer has been burning biomass (tree bark, wood chips, even waste pallets) as our primary heat source since 1998. In addition, in 2002, we completed a thermal storage tank which stores heat gain during the day to supplement the draw at night. This has optimized the energy from our wood boiler and eliminated the use of oil boilers on all but the coldest winter nights. Not only does this decrease our energy cost, keeping us competitive, but also has decreased our carbon footprint and impact on the environment.

Efficiency We have invested in two major areas to increase our operational efficiency. Over the last several years, we have purchased some excellent equipment, including two TTA transplanters, a TTA plug patcher, and a Bouldin & Lawson cuttings trimmer. We waited to invest in some of this equipment until we were sure that the technology had “matured” i.e. - the kinks were worked out. They have proven to be sound investments, reducing labor costs, increasing uniformity and quality, and making new production flow efficiencies possible.

Late last year, we hired Flow Vision of Denver, CO, to become involved in some areas of our production. Although we had been experimenting with and benefitting from some of the “Lean Flow” concepts for several years, the detailed training by these professional consultants has brought our production efficiency and process flow to new levels. We’ve seen significant gains and fully expect this to continue. In our shipping and packaging systems, we realized a savings of 30% in our labor, as well as increasing accuracy in order pulling.

Eco-friendly We’ve switched almost 100% of our vegetative propagation to ellepots, and they’re thriving. Not only are they a cost-effective, stabilized media, but with the AP paper we are using, they are significantly more bio-degradable than some of the other medias we’ve used formerly. Another area of advancement for us this year was the installation of a copper-ionization system to treat our irrigation water, thus reducing algae and plant pathogens. This has resulted in decreased chemical applications of algaecide and fungicide.

So as you can see, Jolly Farmer is facing the economic situation squarely...by improving our systems and operations. By continuing to pay attention to the 3 “E’s”, among many other aspects of our business, we intend to provide you with high quality products and reliable service for many years to come.

James



James at the environment control computer.



Wood boiler



Thermal storage tank



TTA Transplanter



TTA Plug Patcher...see page 7 for a photo tour of the various steps involved in "patching."



Bouldin & Lawson cuttings trimmer



Ellegaard Machine

