

New Project

FV 413

A review of the agronomic factors
that influence postharvest pinking in
lettuce

Project Number:	FV 413
Project Title:	A review of the agronomic factors that influence postharvest pinking in lettuce
Project Leader:	Dr Jim Monaghan
Contractor:	Harper Adams University
Industry Representative:	Dr Ed Moorhouse
Start Date:	01 March 2013
End Date:	31 May 2013
Project Cost (total project cost):	£4,833

Project Summary:

Following harvest some lettuce can produce pink colouring in the butt and ribs of the outer leaves. This is termed Pinking and, in spite of the development of new varieties with claims of reduced pinking, continues to present substantial problems for producers with both UK and imported crops. Poor product on the shelf reduces sales and leads to more complaints and consumer dissatisfaction. It is understood that issues such as high rainfall/over irrigation have a direct influence on expression of pinking, but we do not have a good predictive system for this disorder and growers rely on fairly unscientific "gut-feel" rather than a clear understanding of the best management strategy for this problem. This desk-based study will provide an overview of the underlying physiology of pinking; summarise the information available on the agronomic causes of pinking; and recommend actions that growers could take to reduce pinking.

Aims & Objectives:

(i) Project aim(s):

To identify agronomic factors that influence postharvest pinking in lettuce

(ii) Project objective(s):

- To provide an overview of the underlying physiology of pinking
- To summarise the information available on the agronomic causes of pinking
- To recommend actions growers could take to reduce pinking

Benefits to industry

Pinking losses are hard to quantify, but can account for substantial customer complaints at certain times of the year and batch rejections, particularly during the import season. The conclusions of the study will be available to the industry through the final report, HDC website and presentation to the BLSA if appropriate.

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