

HDC WINTER CAULIFLOWER FV212A

End of year position statement for year ending 31 August 2003

This project is a continuation of the DEFRA funded HortLink project 195 and involves most of the consortium members from the earlier group.

An initial meeting of the consortium was held on 29 October 2002 when a sampling programme for the 2002–2003 season was devised. Participants then supplied HRI Wellesbourne with crop planting dates and estimates of curd initiation were made in early autumn. Crops were sampled after curd initiation and the sample diameters were sent to HRI Wellesbourne. Predictions of curd production in numbers of crates were made and returned to the participants. Samples at or near to curd maturity were also taken and the data sent to Wellesbourne. These data were used to validate the performance of the models for the growth of the cauliflower curds. There was a target of 40 sampled crops for the season, but only 28 useable pairs of crop samples were collected. This was due to the failure of one consortium member to supply data. It is intended to make up this shortfall of 12 crops during the 2003-2004 season.

During the autumn, the software Winter Cauliflower for MORPH was upgraded and revised and in November 2002 a beta copy of Winter Cauliflower Version 0.5 was sent out on CD to all the consortium members for testing. Over the winter, development work on a user-friendly manual has been carried out.

Dr David Wurr presented a poster about the work at the Horticulture in Focus day at The Royal Lancaster Hotel on 27 February 2003.

A further meeting was held on 17 June 2003 to discuss the preliminary analyses of the results. The indicator system incorporates prediction models for three varietal types of winter cauliflower, Roscoffs, Roscoff Walcheren crosses and pure Walcherens. In general, the results for 2002-2003 confirmed those of the previous season under the HortLink project, and there were similar systematic errors for both Roscoffs and for the Roscoff Walcheren crosses. The model for Walcheren types worked very well. These validation results are currently being investigated in order to refine the model performance.

Provided the model is proven sufficiently robust and accurate, it is intended to make it available to HDC members in the autumn 2004.