



Horticultural
Development
Company

New Project

FV 359

Nutrient requirements for field
grown herbs

Project Number: FV 359

Title: Nutrient requirements for field grown herbs

Start and end dates: 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2011 (2 years)

Project Leader: Dr Debbie Fuller, Warwick HRI, University of Warwick, Wellesbourne, Warwick,

Project Co-ordinator: Robert Meakin, Independent, Chichester

Location: Trials will be sited at WHRI and on a commercial farm in the Thames Valley area.

Background and project objectives

The project will utilise established methods for investigating the nutrient requirements of field vegetable crops in order to determine the requirements of field grown herbs for optimising leaf production whilst minimising impact on the environment. There is a current lack of UK based data on which to formulate recommendations for growers, with the majority of the literature originating from different climates and often for different uses, e.g. coriander for seed rather than for leaf production. This gap in information is at odds with the increasing importance of herb production in UK horticulture; market data for the multiples sector suggest a current total market value of around £77 Million which reflects an 11 to 14% year on year increase from 2006.

Given the diversity of species produced by UK growers, this proposal aims to focus on two species initially as a proof of concept whilst also generating useful data. Coriander is the first target species which is widely grown and will represent fast growing single cut annual type. Mint will represent the more complex system of a multi cut perennial that is likely to need supplementary top dressings to maintain vigour. The project will focus on nitrogen as a key nutrient driving accumulation of biomass whilst aiming to provide at least sufficient levels of the remaining key mineral elements in order to prevent restriction of growth through other deficiencies. This will be achieved using information collated from current practise along with published data where available.

The key deliverable from this project will be an improved and scientific basis upon which to base nitrogen fertiliser applications to UK grown coriander and mint crops which would be of direct use to growers and may be used to inform future revisions of RB209. In addition the project aims to demonstrate the value of the methodology for use with a wider range of herb crops / nutrients as required by growers in the future.

Further information

Email the HDC office (hdc@hdc.org.uk), quoting your HDC number, alternatively contact the HDC at the address below.

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