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# **Publications 2014 – 2018**

2014, April 4 <sup>th</sup>	Double Tray System for propagation in trays without concrete
	floors
2014, August 7 <sup>th</sup>	What can vegetable growers learn from the tobacco industry?
2015, November	EXPO AGROALIMENTARIA, MEXICO
2016, January 27 <sup>th</sup>	IPM Exhibition in ESSEN, GERMANY
2016, November 9 <sup>th</sup>	EXPO AGROALIMENTARIA, Holland Pavilion, MEXICO
2017, January 4 <sup>th</sup>	Horticultural innovations at Fruit Logistica
2017, February 10 <sup>th</sup>	Fruit Logistica stage for product launches
2017, April 4th	Thermoformed tray provides aquaponic grower with alternative
	for Styrofoam
2017, November	EXPO AGROALIMENTARIA, MEXICO
2018, May 10 <sup>th</sup>	Challenges for Mexican propagation facilities
2018, June 11 <sup>th</sup>	Floating Double Tray System for hydroponic application
2018, June 14 <sup>th</sup>	Mexico: New DTS plug-in tray for stone wool plugs











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# Double Tray System for propagation in trays without concrete floors

One Greek company that has come through the country's recent economic crisis successfully is INA Plastics SA, a manufacturing firm specializing in thermoformed pots and horticultural trays.

In 2012, INA introduced their innovative and 100% recyclable 'Double Tray System' (DTS), consisting of a top layer for sowing and transplanting plugs and root cuttings, and a rigid bottom layer that provides support when suspended on propagation rails.



Particularly popular in warmer climates, the DTS has been incorporated by all the major seedling producers in Greece, and is widely used in Israel (Hishtil), South Africa, Turkey and Italy. Other countries currently evaluating the product include Spain, California and Mexico.

"The tray can sit on rails because usually propagators don't have tables in their nurseries - they're using rails, so the tray has to be firm enough to sit on two edges. Also DTS can be seeded on the automatic sowing machines used in the market, in exactly the same way that Styrofoam trays do.



"What we're doing is giving the nursery the chance to use the tray sitting on a base. The base can be used again and the top tray can be dispatched on trolleys to the growers," said INA's Jacob Tsonakis.

The DTS is an inventive way for nurseries to propagate in trays without the need to invest in expensive concrete floors, and it's available in various sizes. It also comes with a very affordable price tag, because the









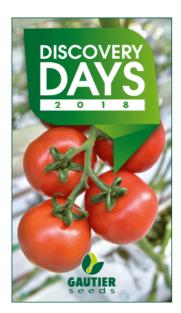


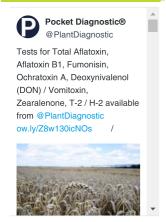












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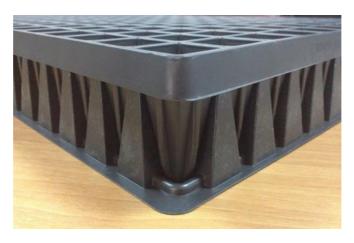
US (GA): University team researching whiteflies statewide

Double Tray System for propagation in trays without concrete floors base can be re-used by the propagator.



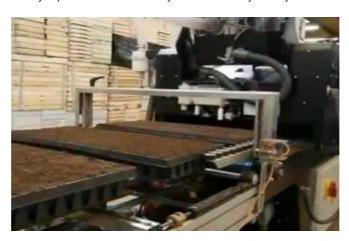
"Both of these trays are under a Euro so the expenditure would be under 50 cents for the propagator," says Tsonakis.

In terms of sanitizing, propagators are encouraged to use a new top tray each time because it is made of coagulated Styrofoam beads that can harbour pathogens; but the plastic bottom layer can be disinfected easily.



"A lot of nurseries are using light chlorine solutions and the disinfection process is very quick, because all these trays fit together so in a barrel of chlorine you can fit 50 or 60 trays at one time," he says.

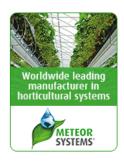
Once sterilized, trays can be re-used up to eight times (based on feedback from Greek companies who use the DTS), although this is heavily dependent on how well they're looked after by nursery workers.



"It has to do with how careful people are in the nursery and if they don't throw bases away and kick them about.

"In South Africa they last less than a year; so it depends on the level of vandalism and how careful people are," concludes Tsonakis.

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Environmentally friendly, one-fits-all floating systems from Greece

# What can vegetable growers learn from the tobacco industry?

INA plastics has developed a new, low cost and environmentally friendly floating double tray system for tobacco propagation recently. Due to the practical and economical characteristics of the system, now many growers (among them SEKE SA, the biggest Greek tobacco producer) are testing and using the trays and INA is already designing a similar system for vegetable growing.

The trays consist of two layers- the top layer holds the medium and the seedlings. It is designed as an alternative to Styrofoam; Because of its hard material the roots of the seedlings cannot infiltrate to the tray. This saves the plants from damage while replanted. The bottom layer is rigid, provides support, reusable after rinsing, can be suspended on propagation rails and can even float on water. The latter is a very important feature, as the most productive and commonly used method for tobacco seedlings is the floating, hydroponic system. Currently growers mainly use Styrofoam, but these trays result in a bigger carbon dioxide footprint, are lower in hygiene standards, they are more expensive and the roots of the plants can get injured while they are replanted.



Jacob Tsonakis from INA Plastics spoke about the system. "The tobacco industry is regulated very strictly, and also the production is subject to heavy rules. The TOBACCO-TRAY is a great opportunity for growers to easily change to something better, eco-friendly and more economical. The bottom layer can carry up to 12 kg of weight, it is reusable and ensures magnificent growing characteristics. As it lets water in and keeps the growing medium wet, it provides all the advantages of similar Styrofoam products."









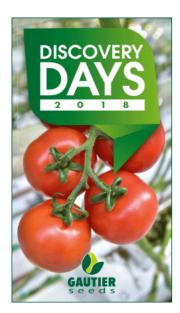














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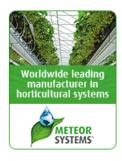


Lately the company has started designing a similar system for hydroponic vegetables, especially lettuce production. As Mr Tsonakis said, "Consumers are more and more interested in buying more and healthier vegetables, which is a great opportunity for hydroponic vegetable production. We saw that our Double Tray System (DTS) is particularly popular among tobacco growers and we realised that it could offer many advantages in vegetable production as well. Thus, we have started designing a similar system for them, which we will introduce in a couple of weeks."





As he explained, these trays would have a greater added value, the "one-fits-all" principle. "We would like to enable growers to use one system throughout the production cycle. For example in cases of lettuce, the growers could sow the seeds into a 54-cell raft. After a while, when the plants are growing, they could be replanted basically to the same tray just with bigger spaces. At the end of the production there would be six full-grown lettuces on the tray."-he said.















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Euro foreign exchange reference rates Source: ECB



As Mr Tsonakis concluded "Our Systems offer great opportunities and excellent growing characteristics for every grower, who is aiming to make the production cheaper, more practical and more environmentally friendly. And who wouldn't want that?"

#### By Luca Utassy and Boy de Nijs

For more information

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Publication date: 7/8/2014 Author: Boy de Nijs

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#### Other news in this sector:

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5/23/2018 "About 80 percent of our propagation material goes out to the industry"

5/18/2018 Tailor-made plugs adapt to growers' needs



Freddy Weel of PlantaNova explaining the benefits of the smart INA Plastics tray AGROALIMENTARIA NOVEMBER 2015. Hortidaily. All rights reserved.



Armando Lopez Castaneda came all the way from Mexico to promote HortiConnect at the booth of Kostas and Jacon Tsonakis of INA Plastics IPM, JANUARY 27, 2016.© Hortidaily. All rights reserved.











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# Mexico: Holland Pavilion and Seminar at Expo Agroalimentaria 2016

Protected horticulture is getting more and more important in Mexico. According to numbers from the Mexican Association for Protected Horticulture (Asociación Mexicana de Horticultura Protegida AC – AMHPAC) at this moment the sector is good for 240,000 fixed jobs and 300,000 indirect jobs. The sector is growing with impressive numbers. Each year around 1,500 hectares of protected horticulture are being built and nowadays there are more than 23,000 hectares in existence.

The Expo Agroalimentaria is the most important horticulture fair in Mexico (in 2015 a bit more than 100.000 visitors) and therefore the perfect place to meet companies and people from the sector. There is an indoor exposition area of 40,000 m2 with 794 stands, demonstration plots, and a business center. The outdoor exposition area, mainly with machinery and agricultural implements, has a surface of 8,400 m2. There are seminar rooms, demonstrative plots and greenhouses.

The 21st edition of the Expo Agroalimentaria 2016 takes place from Tuesday November 8th to Friday November 11th in Irapuato - Mexico. It is the second time that it takes place on a larger location just outside Irapuato.



Agricultural counselor Jean Rummenie (right) and Frank Hoogendoorn of the Dutch Embassy at last year's Holland Pavilion

This year the Holland pavilion (Indoor stands A609 – A1110) is also bigger than in previous years. It consists of 23 stands which will be used to promote a wide variety of companies: Aweta, Priva América Latina S.A. de C.V., Patron Agri Systems International, Plantanova, Cultilène, Flier Systems, HortiConnect NL, Grow Group, Global Green Team, INA Plastics S.A., Hoogendoorn America Inc., VB Greenhouses, Voltea, Anthura B.V., Van der Knaap - Forteco, Prins Group, Vivero Flor y Miel S.P.R. de R.L., Royal Brinkman México S de RL de CV, HortiMaX B.V., SION Young Plants B.V., and The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Total Dutch presence at the Expo Agroalimentaria is even higher because some other Dutch companies are located elsewhere at the fair and there will also be many Dutch visitors.









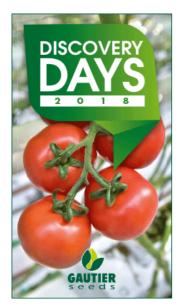




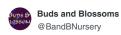








Tweeting Growers



I love fireflies! Bad frog, lol! facebook.com/13774570624387

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Italy: Tomato grower plans to light 6 hectares with LED

Italy: Di Meo Remo acquires new production areas

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US (GA): University team researching whiteflies statewide



Impression of the Expo Agroalimentaria in 2015

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and all Dutch companies at the Expo Agroalimentaria will be glad to offer you the information and products you are looking for.

On Wednesday November 9th the Dutch ambassador in Mexico, Margriet Leemhuis, will visit the expo. That same day the seminar "Soluciones Holandesas para Mejorar la Producción en Invernadero" takes place in conference room "B". From 11:00 - 12:00 Juan Gonzalez (Hoogendoorn Growth Management) will talk about "The Next Generation Growing" ("La Nueva Generación de Técnicas de Producción") and from 12:00 - 13:00 Monica Cabildo (Wageningen UR Food & Biobased Research) will give her presentation about the Mexican Agrofood sector called "Sector Agroalimentario Mexicano: El dinero que dejamos en la mesa".





La Oficina Agrícola de la Embajada del Reino de los Países Bajos la Asociación Mexicana de Horticultura Protegida AC (AMHPAC), se complacen en invitarle al

SOLUCIONES HOLANDESAS PARA MEJORAR LA PRODUCCIÓN EN INVERNADERO

Miércoles 9 de noviembre 2016 de las 11:00 a 13:00 horas

Salón de Conferencias "B

Expo Agroalimentaria Guanajuato

#### Apertura

Embajadora del Reino de los Países Bajos en México, Margriet Leemhuis

#### Conferencias

Generación de Técnicas de Producción alez (Hoogendoorn Growth Management)

ector Agroalimentario Mexicano: El dinero que dejamos en la mesa Mónica Cabildo (Wageningen UR Food & Biobased Research)

Nos dará mucho gusto recibirlo en el pabellón de Holanda (locales 609-1110) y stand de AMHPAC (local 313) en la nave A durante la Expo Agroalimentaria Guanajuato





















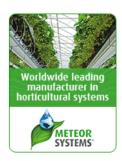






If you come to the Expo Agroalimentaria don't forget to attend the seminar and visit the different stands of the Holland Pavilion.

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# Horticultural innovations at Fruit Logistica

With Fruit Logistica coming up, many companies are showcasing new products. Here, we highlight a number of them that are relevant to horticulture.

Improving uptake efficiency and soil stability Vegand plant-based fertiliser



Vegand is a plant fertiliser containing natural ingredients that release nutrients and microorganisms to improve uptake efficiency and soil stability. The quality of the fertiliser components ensures that the organic nitrogen from 100% plant-based sources is released gradually. The presence of selected plant proteins and amino acids improves soil chemistry and optimises the activity of microorganisms. Vegand contains organic nitrogen, phosphorus pentoxide, potassium and vegetable carbon to support plant nutrition and soil composition. The exhibitor's objective is to help growers develop a new fertilisation concept that takes into account the new soil protection techniques. The product composition interacts with soil microorganisms - the key to good soil fertility.

### Fomet spa

IT-San Pietro di Morubio Hall 10.1, Booth A-02 Contact: Angelo Giambruno Phone: +39-045-6969004 a.giambruno@fomet.it www.fomet.it

Fast and cost-effective seasonal tying systems Tomato ties









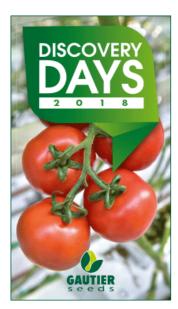














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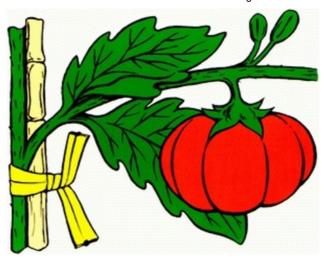
Canadian cannabis industry in high spirits

Italy: Tomato grower plans to light 6 hectares with LED

Italy: Di Meo Remo acquires new production areas

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US (GA): University team researching whiteflies statewide



Tiefix rolls and Tiefix-HD tying pliers are an ideal solution for fast and cost-effective seasonal ties in vineyards and orchards, in horticulture and in nurseries. The tool produces the tape in a single movement and combines twisting and cutting in a single operation. The biodegradable tie decomposes in six to eight months, while the photodegradable tie requires eight to ten months. Instead of having to be cut off at the end of the season, the decomposed tie simply drops off. This saves a lot of time. The 250 and 500-metre Tiefix rolls dramatically reduce tying time by enabling continuous, seamless dispensing. And the precisely wound Tiefix rolls can be managed quickly and cost-effectively with the new light and convenient Tiefix-HD tying pliers, a trade fair premiere at Fruit Logistica 2017.

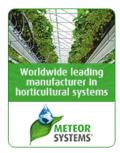
#### **General Plastics Srl**

IT-Rome Hall 7.1a, Booth B-03 Contact: Cristian Franchi Phone: +39-06-8889941 sales@generalplastics.it www.tiefix.com

#### Sustainable plant bag for growing tasty tomatoes Sustainable plant bag



Greenyard Horticulture presents a sustainable plant bag for the cultivation of aromatic tomatoes as a trade fair premiere at Fruit Logistica 2017. The bag is fully compostable and filled with 100% organic substrate, and is being marketed as an alternative to conventional rock wool. It can be used to cultivate different varieties of greenhouse vegetables such as tomatoes and sweet peppers. Tomatoes are particularly susceptible to the "crazy roots syndrome". This is significantly inhibited by the new grow bag with its unique chemical, physical and biological properties. The grow bag represents a more sustainable alternative for growers because it is made of natural products and is completely compostable. Trials in Belgium have also shown that tomatoes cultivated on an organic substrate were found to be more tasty.















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Euro foreign exchange reference rates

#### Greenyard

BE-Sint-Katelijne-Waver Hall 5.2, Booth A-03 Contact: Nancy Goovaerts Phone: +32-15-324296

nancy.goovaerts@greenyardfoods.com

www.greenyard.group

#### Balanced growth and anti-stress fertilisation for all cultivation types High-tech fertiliser







RS technology, an innovative manufacturing process developed by the exhibiting company, reduces the size of particles in suspension and improves the fertiliser's affinity with the plant. RS technology enables micronisation of the particles in a solution that can be spread evenly on plant surfaces for better penetration of leaves and roots. The special advantages of this process inspired Hydro Fert to further develop two of its best products: Grow Quick and Vigor L Rapido. Both can be used in organic agriculture and will be making their trade fair debut at Fruit Logistica 2017. Grow Quick is an organic nitrogen fertiliser that stimulates balanced growth throughout the cultivation cycle. Vigor L Rapido is a biostimulating product that provides anti-stress fertiliser for all cultivation types.

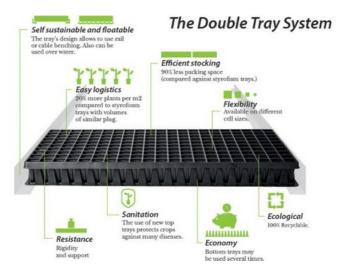
# Hydro Fert s.r.l.

IT-Barletta Hall 10.1, Booth B-12 Contact: Francesco Di Pietro Phone: +39-0883-513494

export@hydrofert.it www.hydrofert.it

#### Healthier plants and 100% eco-friendly

Double Tray System







#### Horticultural innovations at Fruit Logistica

DTS, the Double Tray System from Ina Plastics, is an innovative solution for seedling propagation and hydroponics. This new product consists of a top layer for sowing and transplanting plugs and root cuttings, and a rigid bottom layer that provides support when suspended on propagation rails. According to the exhibitor, the product's intelligent construction makes DTS a superior alternative to Styrofoam EPS trays. Compared to EPS, DTS offers numerous advantages when it comes to productivity, logistics and lower price – without the EPS drawbacks, because it produces healthier plants and is 100% eco-friendly. DTS has already been introduced in most operations throughout Greece and is being used by many companies worldwide. Various sizes and cell-count configurations are available. The 300 and 171 cell variations measuring 67 x 33cm are celebrating their world premiere at Fruit Logistica 2017.

#### Ina Plastics SA

GR-Aspropyrgos Hall 8.1, Booth B-25 Contact: Kostas Tsonakis Phone: +30-210-5580126 ktsonakis@ina-plastics.com

#### Navigational aids for bumblebees

Natupol Excel beehive

www.ina-plastics.com



Bumblebees have orientation problems when daylight is reduced by factors such as the use of artificial light during the darkest months of the year or extra layers of poly covers. The 'bee vision' features on Natupol Excel hives are designed to help bumblebees navigate in these and other unfavourable conditions. Natupol Excel, a European premiere at Fruit Logistica 2017, is specifically developed for crops with a high number of blossoming flowers, including cherry tomatoes and (straw)berries and can be used in illuminated greenhouses. Strategically placed reflective cues on the boxes and additional colour cues around the hive entry improve visibility. This conforms to the visual spectrum of bumblebees and improves pollination results. The hive has a bigger colony, large ventilation holes equipped with a smart intruders block and 19% more sugar water for increased and longer pollination.

#### **Koppert Biological Systems**

NL-Berkel en Rodenrijs Hall 1.2, Booth D-08 Contact: Judita Bokrosova Phone: +31-5140444 jbokrosova@koppert.nl www.koppert.com

#### Premium range and online platform for tomatoes

Premium range









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# Fruit Logistica international stage for product launches

A growing number of international greenhouse technology and supply companies are using the annual Fruit Logistica exhibition in Berlin as a podium for new product launches. Over the last three days we have been walking the 25th edition of the trade show in Berlin and we got acquainted with a number of noteworthy new innovations.



If you were looking for greenhouse structures and technology, ground floor halls 6.1, 7.1 and 8.1 were the place to be this year.



Spanish greenhouse builder J.Huete introduced a new automated, oscillating gutter system for strawberry production.



New pepper and melon propagation trays at the booth of Greece tray





























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# Thermoformed tray provides aquaponic grower with alternative for styrofoam

In order to provide an alternative to bulky styrofoam propagation trays, INA Plastics developed the rigid Double Tray System that enables growers to cultivate young plants on rails and water against a lower cost with maximum hygiene. Five years since its inception, an increasing amount of growers are picking up the new system.

INA PLastics started in 2010 with the design for the new tray. "We wanted to make a more productive, efficient and environmentally friendly substitute to the bulky styrofoam trays", explained Kostas Tsonakis of INA Plastics. " The idea was simple: all we needed was to give to the insert tray, which was already being used in the EPS tray, the necessary rigidity to stand on its own without increasing its weight and the cost that comes with it."



The two trays: the insert tray gives the upper cell tray a lot of strenght.

Tsonakis explained that they made the insert tray slightly heavier than a standard propagation tray. To make the tray more rigid, a special 'negative' tray with a "space frame" structure was created. "The combination of the two trays ensured that it was light and rigid enough and ideal for on rail propagation. The resulted in many advantages like better plant growth, root development, cost efficiency and logistics."



As with everything new, Tsonakis said that in the beginning it proved to be very difficult to convince growers why they should use the new tray as an alternative to the Styrofoam trays. "It required a lot of strategic planning









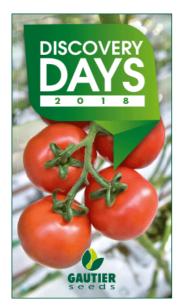












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Thermoformed tray provides aquaponic grower with alternative for styrofoam

and teamwork to find the right growers and convince them. We knew we had created something innovative, but never expected its potential and wide range of application possibilities thanks to special features."



The floating trays.

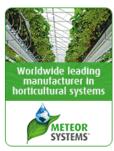
One of those features of the Double Tray System was its ability to float on water. "Thanks to detailed engineering and design of the base and different material composition; the DTS is able to float on water carrying the weight of developed plants on any cell configuration."

Due to its floating ability, the DTS was immediately adopted by the tobacco growers, who gradually started replacing their EPS trays. "They started with the 210 cell initially and later on a 300 cell tray was found ideal. Tobacco growers saw a tremendous increase in plant quality and growth."



vegetables growin in the trays in an aquaponic situation

Besides the early adaptation of the tobacco industry, the company informs that also hydroponic and aquaponic growers have started with the use of the DTS for the cultivation of vegetable seedlings. "Currently the tray is commercially used in more than 20 countries worldwide and everyday a new grower starts with a trial. Many of them are so convinced when they see the results, that they do not want to go back to EPS trays."





















Jacob and Kostas Tsonakis of INA Plastics and Serge Pas of Cultilene together with their local representative Carlos Alvarez Maldonado AGROALIMENTARIA NOVEMBER 2017 Hortidaily. All rights reserved.









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# Floating double tray system for hydroponic application

After having their double tray system proven its benefits in on rail propagation, the team of Ina Plastics has developed a floating tray for hydroponic applications. Tobacco grower Mile Tanasic from Usvice has been using the trays over the last three years. "I have 96% healthy developed plants every year, I use significantly less seeds and about 20% less substrate."



In 2012, INA introduced their 100% recyclable 'Double Tray System' (DTS), consisting of a top layer for sowing and transplanting plugs and root cuttings, and a rigid bottom layer that provides support when suspended on propagation rails. After having proven its benefits (stronger plants, higher yields etc) in on rail propagation (vegetables), Ina Plastics, developed the product's floating characteristics for hydroponic applications.

One of the first growers to adapt the Double Tray System was Mr. Mile Tanasic from Uzvece, a small village in north west Serbia. He is a contracted grower of one of the big tobacco leaf producers and started with his trials back in 2016. After the first successful trial, seeing the results, he was convinced this is the right tray for his tobacco seedlings. He immediately purchased the trays needed to fill his 7 hectare field with perfectly developed young plants.











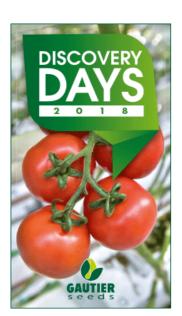














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"This is the third year I am using the trays and I think I am going to be using them for at least another three", Mr Tanasic tells. "I do not need to see something more to be convinced."

The tray he is using is the 210 cells floating Double Tray system. He uses it to grow Virginia tobacco. "Handling the DTS it just as easy as I used to handle the EPS trays. "I have 96% healthy developed plants every year, I use significantly less seeds about 20% less substrate. Regarding the yield: when using the Styrofoam trays I was calculating about 1.8 tons per hectare, now I calculate at least 2.2 tons which is more than 20% increase in production."

The plants are transplanted easily to the field with remarkable ease of extraction. "No remaining plants are left on the trays from the material of the tray and after use I simply wash them and keep them in my warehouse ready to be used again."



Stories like these led through trials to the adaptation of the DTS by the big tobacco leaf producers of the world like Universal Leaf Europe, which is implementing the tray to their farmers more and more every year. "Developing the floatation of the system with the tobacco experts was key to the product's success", Kostas Tsonakis of Ina Plastics tells. "The superiority of the tray and all its benefits started to show even in the very first trials with germination rate of over 95%, strong and healthy root system and thus higher yields. And growers like Mr Tanasic are the reason we keep on developing solutions taking into account the growers needs and the environment."

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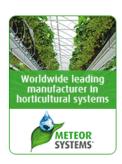
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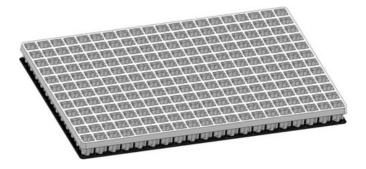
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#### Production started

#### Mexico: New DTS plug-in tray for stone wool plugs

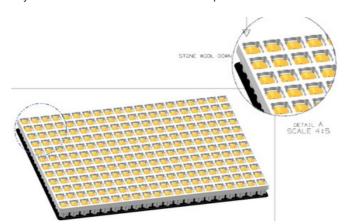
INA Plastics designed a new tray for stone wool plugs based on the Double Tray Invention, the DTS Plug-In tray on the 60X40 cm footprint holding 240 stone wool plugs of 27 mm.

The cell design of the DTS Plug-In offers ideal air pruning and allows the fingers of robotic transplanters to pick up the plants, thus the tray works well in advanced automatic production lines and offers all the benefits of the Double Tray System: economy, hygiene, productivity, plant quality and environmental protection.



Although the cost of the DTS Plug-In tray allows it to be considered as a one-use tray, with all the benefits of this procedure, it can be reusable by reusing the bottom tray for at least three or four years, replace only the top tray in order to take all the advantages of the one-use tray at half the cost of any other alternative e.g. light EPS tray.

The new DTS Plug-In tray will be available before the end of this year and its presentation coincides with the decision of the company to start producing the DTS locally, close to the big markets. This became necessary in order to be able to cover the demand, to minimize transportation costs and to ensure the growers for the availability of the trays even in unforeseen circumstances and periods of extreme demand.



Following this commitment, the company will establish production facilities in the Guanajuato area, to service customers in Mexico, via its affiliate company, INA Insumos Agricolas SA de CV, for the sales, technical support and distribution of its products. The first stage of production operations will be the set-up with an automatic line, especially developed by Conic System, for the assembly of the DTS Plug-In tray with stone wool plugs. Conic System is in close cooperation with INA Plastics over the years and has already in the market a special automation, the Double De-stacker, for the assembly of DTS.









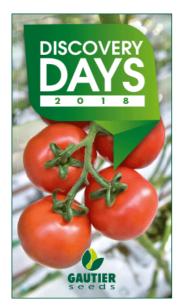














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The aim is to establish, as of March 2019, production of the DTS Plug-In tray and other configurations DTS trays, for the Mexican and the US market.

# For more information INA Plastics SA Jacob Tsonakis

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