

PRESS RELEASE

Sweet pointed peppers are becoming more popular. Mainly due to taste and health value, the consumption by consumers is increasing. Sweet pointed peppers are available in different colors; red, yellow and orange.

Brands such as Sweet Palermo are also becoming increasingly well-known among producer organizations. The production and processing of the sweet pointed pepper is a labor-intensive process. The shape and weight are variable and unpredictable, which makes the selection process, uniting, sorting and packing by weight and volume a challenge.

Manually taking individual peppers from crates and trying to find the most ideal combination in terms of weight is not only very labor intensive, but also prone to having a high percentage of “give-away”.

Crux Agrobotics has therefore been working on the SortiPack® Sweet Pointed Peppers, a fully automated system for grading, sorting and packing sweet pointed peppers into crates, trays (flow packs) and bags.

This is done on the basis of dimensional properties, such as length, diameter, curvature and/or weight. Depending on the hectares of product and different number of packages, 5 - 10 FTE can be saved. At the same time, the SortiPack® Robots ensure that the production becomes more scalable, as the robots can be used year-round (so also for imported product) and ultimately 24/7/365.

The advantages of SortiPack® Sweet Pointed Peppers:

- Saving labour costs (which is becoming increasingly scarce and costly), at an average payback period of 3-4 years
- Consistent and hygienic processing with optimization of giveaway weight (because the robot selects from a larger number of products and self-learning algorithms determine the optimal combination)
- Simultaneous processing of different packages trays, crates, bags, or multiple customer batches
- Increased Flexibility. Besides fully automated sorting and packing, SortiPack has optionally the provision of traditional rotation tables integrated in its line in order for human labor to work besides Robots for specific batches, packages or the processing of class B product for

instance

- Recording of data, which is real time available, including individual data such as weight, length, diameter, shape, rejected product per product, package or batch

The system is scalable up to approximately 20.000 Sweet Pointed peppers that can be sorted and packed per hour. The configuration can be adjusted based on the actual situation (less robots mean a lower capacity and vice versa).

The first feedback from growers is positive. Crux Agribotics has developed grippers that can pick up and put away the jagged sweet pointed peppers at high speed, without damaging the product (internally). By means of this automation, Crux Agribotics responds to making growers less dependent on human labour for the future (larger) food demand.

At the same time, it reduces food waste and enables growers to achieve greater sales with fewer people and a smaller footprint (SortiPack® is typically much more compact than current lines in packaging halls) against a reasonable payback period. Michel van Reenen, Business Manager Crux Agribotics: 'Recently we have seen that labour is becoming increasingly scarce and expensive, apart from the indirect costs (training, replacement, housing)'.
'

Corona also confronted us with the vulnerability that comes with the dependence on people and displayed what can happen when they are suddenly no longer available. Crux Agribotics supplies and supports the SortiPack® systems worldwide.

In addition to a traditional purchase of the system, the system is also offered through a pay-as-you-use model where the grower pays a part upfront and a part over a variable period of time after which the system becomes the property of the grower (i.e. a kind of hire-purchase). This service is called SPaaS, Sort and Pack as a Service.