



Growing Media
Europe

**Growing media –
Growing out of the soil as a challenge for the future**

Stefaan Vandaele
IPS Symposium, 14 May 2019, Bremen

Growing Media Europe – the voice of the growing media sector on European level

- Founded 2016, AISBL
- General Assembly (29 Members)
- Board of Directors (5 people)
- Working Groups and Task Forces
- Secretariat in Brussels



IPS Symposium 14 May 2019

Growing Media Europe – the voice of the growing media sector on European level

4 Fields of Action:

- Political Interest Representation
- Networking and Public Affairs
- Service to the Members
- Membership Development



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Council of the
European Union

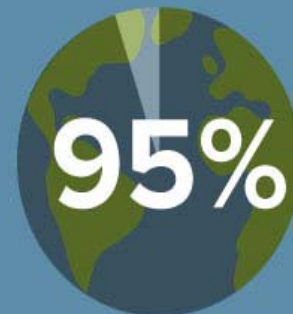
Growing your food & Greening your life!

Global Food Security in an Urbanizing World

By 2050, **2/3** of the world's population will live in urban areas.



In the next 20 years,



of the world's population growth will occur in developing nations.

80%



of food for cities comes from domestic sources in rural areas.

The poorest households in the developing world spend

60-80%



of their incomes on food.

Growing your food & Greening your life!



Q&A: Berry chat with Driscoll's of the Americas president Soren Bjorn

And do you think the future of that and other berries will be in substrate production?

I don't think there's any doubt about that, especially as you have challenges for labor availability and labor cost. We have to go to labor production systems that are more efficient and also more efficient for the harvesters so it's easier for the fruit to be picked.

Something like a raspberry crop is very labor intensive. It can get very pushy and crowded once you're on the first cycle, so one of the opportunities is to grow them in substrate and spread the plants out. It really helps with the ease of harvest and the ease of production, so that is very much the journey we're on.

But it's happening. In Europe it's a big part of production and in Australia we are 100% already; in Tasmania on strawberries it's 100% tabletop strawberry production because it's easier for the harvesters and in many ways it's easier for the grower once you get it set up. There's a big upfront investment, but in the long run it's not a big investment. Once you get over that, then actually there's a lot less work.

Would you say it's the same in blueberries?

It's the same in blueberries, but in blueberries what's happened is when you go to substrate you actually get fruit production much faster and that's the real big payback. The disadvantage of blueberries compared to other berries is it's slow, but in substrate you can actually make it a lot faster.

And it's also opened up regions where maybe the climate is right but the soil is very difficult, because blueberries are very temperamental. They need that low pH, and if that doesn't naturally exist and the soil is heavy, it's difficult to manage. If you go to substrate, you can get that right away.

Substrate as a solution for challenges for labor availability and labor cost: *"The future of berries will be in substrate production. We have to go to labor production systems that are more efficient and also more efficient for the harvesters so it's easier for the fruit to be picked."*

Increase production *"when you go to substrate you actually get fruit production much faster and that's the real big payback."*

Create the right climate and soil environment: *"it's also opened up regions where maybe the climate is right but the soil is very difficult, because blueberries are very temperamental. They need that low pH, and if that doesn't naturally exist and the soil is heavy, it's difficult to manage. If you go to substrate, you can get that right away."*

→ *Out of the soil growing in substrate*

Growing your food & Greening your life!

- ❖ Objectives of society
 1. Food security for a growing world population
 2. More fruits & vegetables for healthy nutrition
 3. Greener cities and living areas
 4. Afforestation for climate and biodiversity

- ❖ Challenges for growers
 1. Lack of labour
 2. Limited resources (water, fertiliser, land, ..)
 3. Extreme weather conditions

→ Growing out of the soil is THE solution!

IPS Symposium 14 May 2019

Growing your food & Greening your life!



Growing your food & Greening your life!

Growing Media help horticulture to be TRIPLE sustainable:

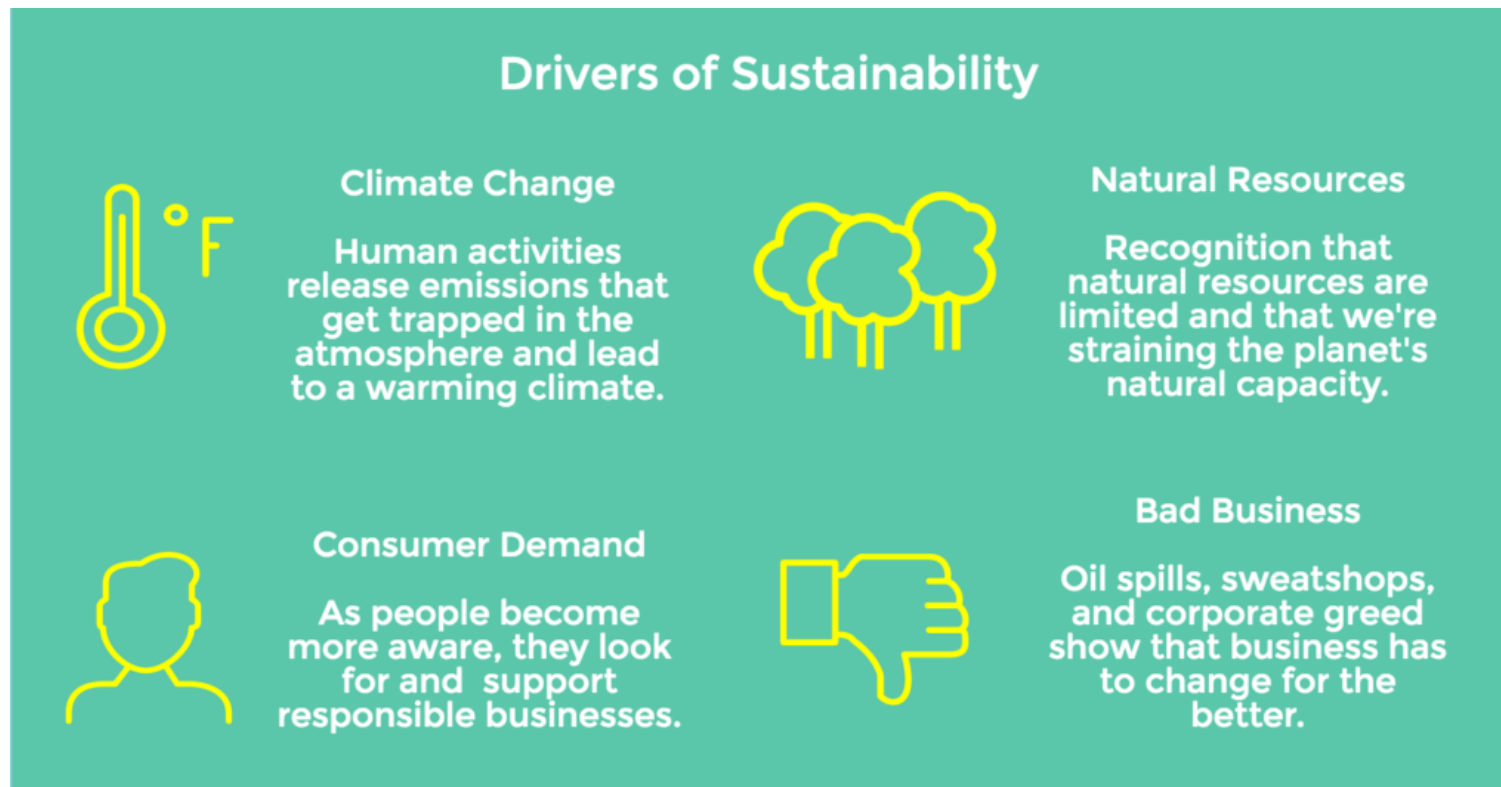
1. Environmentally
 - ✓ Less land use
 - ✓ Closed loop: less water, less fertiliser
→ No leaching
 - ✓ Less pesticides
2. Socially
 - ✓ Better working conditions
 - ✓ All year round
 - ✓ Local for local
3. Economically
 - ✓ Higher yield and longer season
 - ✓ Better quality crop



Growing your food & Greening your life!

A more sustainable horticulture is the goal!

→ The GM industry needs to be part of it, in a sustainable way!



Growing your food & Greening your life!

But what is a “sustainable” growing medium?

- ✓ Fit for purpose = meeting agronomic efficiency criteria
- ✓ Low environmental footprint (product and production method)
- ✓ Economically viable
- ✓ Socially compliant



Growing your food & Greening your life!

GME Sustainability Agenda

"...Growing Media Europe declares its commitment to answer the worldwide increasing demand for growing media in the most sustainable way possible."

Commitment to best practices in the sector
(RPP, FSC, PEFC,...)

And there is more to come....



- LCA project → environmental labelling
- GME Code of Practice

IPS Symposium 14 May 2019

Growing your food & Greening your life!

Challenges for Society, Horticulture, Growing Media Industry, Growing Media

- Exploding demand for Growing Media
- New era in horticulture

Together,
let's make the shift possible....





Growing Media
Europe

www.growing-media.eu