
Table of contents

1	Prologue	9
2	Comparison of costs and yields of 'type top' and 'type average' growers in Dutch sugar beet growing	19
2.1	Summary	20
2.2	Introduction	21
2.3	Materials and Methods	22
2.3.1	<i>Data source</i>	22
2.3.2	<i>Calculation of total variable costs</i>	24
2.3.3	<i>Yield and beet price</i>	26
2.3.4	<i>Statistical analysis</i>	27
2.4	Results	27
2.4.1	<i>Effect of grower and interactions with site and year</i>	27
2.4.2	<i>Difference between grower types</i>	30
2.4.3	<i>Regression analysis</i>	37
2.5	Discussion	40
2.6	References	46
3	Pests and diseases contribute to sugar beet yield difference between top and averagely managed farms.....	49
3.1	Abstract.....	50
3.2	Introduction	51
3.3	Materials and Methods	52
3.3.1	<i>Pair study</i>	52
3.3.2	<i>Soil samples</i>	53
3.3.3	<i>Detection of Beet Necrotic Yellow Vein Virus</i>	53
3.3.4	<i>Bioassay of soil suppression against Rhizoctonia solani Kühn</i>	54
3.3.5	<i>Bioassay for determination field infestation by Aphanomyces cochlioides</i>	55

Improvement of the competitiveness of the sugar beet crop in the Netherlands

3.3.6	<i>Quantification of nematodes</i>	55
3.3.7	<i>Scoring of foliar symptoms</i>	56
3.3.8	<i>Determination of sugar yield</i>	57
3.3.9	<i>Statistical analysis</i>	57
3.4	Results	58
3.5	Discussion	65
3.6	References	70
4	Analysis of soil characteristics, soil management and sugar yield on top and averagely managed farms in sugar beet (<i>Beta vulgaris</i> L.) production in the Netherlands ...	75
4.1	Abstract	76
4.2	Introduction	77
4.3	Materials and methods	78
4.3.1	<i>Selection of grower pairs and plots</i>	78
4.3.2	<i>Soil management observations and soil measurements</i>	79
4.3.3	<i>Crop measurements</i>	80
4.3.4	<i>Analysis of the data</i>	80
4.4	Results	81
4.4.1	<i>Soil characteristics of sugar beet fields in the Netherlands</i>	81
4.4.2	<i>Differences between 'type top' and 'type average' growers</i>	84
4.4.3	<i>Effects of soil type and management on soil structure and subsequent crop growth</i> 85	
4.5	Discussion	89
4.6	Conclusions	93
4.7	References	94
5	Harvesting losses ... How to yield this hidden financial potential	99
5.1	Abstract	100
5.2	Introduction	101
5.3	Materials and methods	101

Improvement of the competitiveness of the sugar beet crop in the Netherlands

5.4	Results and discussion	102
5.5	Conclusions	104
5.6	References	105
6	Epilogue.....	107
6.1	Introduction	108
6.2	Fertilization with main and trace elements.....	109
6.2.1	<i>Materials and methods</i>	109
6.2.2	<i>Results</i>	111
6.2.3	<i>Discussion</i>	115
6.3	Sugar beet sowing	117
6.3.1	<i>Materials and methods</i>	117
6.3.2	<i>Results</i>	118
6.3.3	<i>Discussion</i>	119
6.4	Weed control.....	121
6.4.1	<i>Materials and methods</i>	121
6.4.2	<i>Results</i>	122
6.4.3	<i>Discussion</i>	125
6.5	References	127
7	Outlook	131
8	Summary	135
9	Curriculum Vitae	141
10	Acknowledgements	143