

Sustainable development in the Philippines

Long before incorporating a new structure in the Philippines, BIOGROW was already looking at how we could organize it as a sustainable development program, capitalizing on the experience and impact we had in Sri Lanka or India. The production of high-quality coconut husk-based substrates is indeed really efficient at creating jobs for those who need it the most in remote, impoverished coconut farming communities.

Being labour intensive at every step of the chain, we know that starting a new factory not only creates hundreds of direct jobs, but also provides income for thousands of others involved in our extended network of supply. Those jobs are usually located in the countryside, and are not at risk of being relocated as they are intrinsically linked to the coconut production area. During our initial baseline study however, we have seen that 60% of the coconut farmers in the Philippines were living way below the poverty line, with income from the coconut farm often below 50,000 PHP (1,000 USD per year).

Read the full article on the BIOGROW website



GrowTech LLC : a Russian success story

In this edition, we're featuring an article about our distributor for the Russian market GrowTech LLC. Stories of business success motivate and inspire, and this is especially true in the contemporary Russian marketplace. In order for businesses to thrive in this challenging market they have to be able to cope with working in uncertain conditions and overcome numerous and diverse challenges on a daily basis, and yet still remain efficient and forward-thinking.

If you can succeed in all these areas, longevity is guaranteed and the rewards can be great. And if the business project is developed, launched and managed by a woman it also helps to dispel traditional stereotypes and show that there are new ways to run and manage a successful business.

GrowTech LLC is a striking example of how to start a business from scratch and after just a few years become a market leader in its chosen sector.

See the full article on www.bio-grow.com



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"Another important factor in all of this is the dramatic hike in sea freight prices since the beginning of the global pandemic, which has had a strong effect on the supply and geographical demand of cocopeat & peat moss."

China : now a key market for cocopeat

Recent projections for global substrate demand have shed light on the challenges the industry faces in the years and decades ahead. New crops being produced in substrates (including soft fruit, vegetables and leafy greens, transplants, and cannabis) are helping to drive the future demand in addition to the emerging Chinese horticulture market. Even though in the beginning very few growers in China knew what coir was, increasing numbers are now discovering its advantages in **increasing** productivity, and not only are they using it, but they have also learnt to identify good from bad quality, which is very positive for the future growth of this market.

Although greenhouses in China are gradually changing from soil to soilless growing medium, especially coir, many growers are not yet willing to pay for this change. For this reason, demonstration greenhouses have sprung up across China, which allow local growers to experience first-hand the advantages of these new practices before they are ready to invest on their own. However, this transition process will require time and ongoing technical support from suppliers to increase the demand for grow bags. This is why Biogrow has assembled a local team to follow and support our clients.

Another important factor in all of this is the dramatic hike in sea freight prices since the beginning of the global pandemic. This has had a strong effect on the supply and geographical demand of cocopeat & peat moss. Previously, peat moss harvested in Northern Europe went primarily to Europe and Asia, and cocopeat produced in Asia was shared between Northern Europe, Northern America, and Asia. Now because of the astronomic cost of sea freight, the peat moss is staying in Europe, and the demand for compressed substrate has increased in Asia, with a particular focus on bales and loose coir.

Time will tell if this "pandemic-influenced" change will become a permanent feature in the global substrates market or whether things will eventually revert back to the way they were before.

And what will decide this? In three words, ocean freight cost.



News in brief:

- New Operations Manager to join BIOGROW India (more information in the next edition of Horti+)
- Congratulations to our Operations Manager in Sri Lanka, Mr Nishantha Hewage, for gaining his Master in Business Administration with distinction no less 🏆



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- **Fruit Focus 2022**

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