

Press release 4 February 2015

## **International partnership will develop first market ready sweet pepper harvesting robot**

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<https://picasaweb.google.com/115915961286327465946/Bingo#>

**12 February 2015 will be the start of SWEEPER, an innovation driven international research programme for the development of the first generation market ready sweet pepper harvesting robot. The research is being supported by the Horizon 2020 programme of European Union. Wageningen University & Research Centre will coordinate the international network in which partners from Sweden, Israel, Belgium and the Netherlands take part. The partnership includes universities, research institutes, a system integrator and a large grower of sweet pepper.**

During the past decade fundamental research has led to insights and technology developments that will allow the SWEEPER partners to further develop the sweet pepper harvesting robot from the previous European project CROPS . The robot will be the first harvesting robot in the world, operating in a commercial greenhouse. The robot will strengthen Europe's leading role in agricultural robotics. It will also improve the competitiveness of the European greenhouse sector, which faces a low availability of skilled workforce.

The first generation market ready sweet pepper harvesting robot will open a new high tech commercial area. SWEEPER aims at sweet pepper only, of which 1,300,000,000 kg is harvested in Europe yearly. It is expected that the knowledge and technology from the SWEEPER programme can easily be migrated to other greenhouse crops.

The SWEEPER innovation programme is a partnership between Umea Universitet in Sweden, Ben Gurion University of Negev in Israel, Proefstation voor de Groenteteelt in Belgium and from the Netherlands Wageningen University & Research centre, Irmato Industrial Solutions Veghel B.V. and sweet pepper grower De Tuindershoek BV.

The Horizon 2020 framework programme for Research and Innovation of the European Union financially supports the programme with € 4,000,000.

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Notes for the editor

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