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*Conclusion of Hortifair debate confirms Grodan stone wool substrates are most sustainable*

## Grodan substrate solutions more sustainable than coco

**During a debate with coco peat substrate supplier, van der Knaap, at the Hortifair last week, Grodan successfully claimed its position as the most sustainable substrate supplier within high-tech horticulture.**

The debate, held between Jan de Smet (Van der Knaap) and Vincent Deenen (Grodan), centred on the statement 'coco peat is not the most sustainable substrate'. It turned out to be an interesting and well attended debate, where questions ranged from procurement of raw materials and working conditions through to recycling solutions and communication towards consumers. Both participants also took the opportunity to explain their interpretation of sustainability. Vincent Deenen referred to a definition used ever more frequently within the horticultural sector, which was created by the United Nations: "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Within sustainable development, environment protection, economic growth and social development have to be in balance."

### Sustainable cultivation

Jan de Smet was asked what the difference between cultivation on either type of substrate is, he responded by saying that cultivation on coco peat substrate could be carried out just as effectively as on stone wool substrate. Vincent Deenen replied, "You can cultivate well on both substrates, but the telling question is, which substrate allows for the most sustainable cultivation? Grodan solutions are geared towards Precision Growing, the most efficient form of growing, which focuses on the use of minimum input materials to generate maximum output and it has the least impact on the environment. We have measured this extensively and results have shown that, by some degree, this is best accomplished on our stone wool solutions".

### The Life Cycle Analysis

During the debate, both parties referred to the importance of a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA), which is an extensive method for measuring the total environmental impact of a product during its entire life cycle. The LCA, recently carried out for both parties by the same independent environmental consultancy, makes a clear comparison possible between suppliers. During the debate it was revealed that Grodan has the lowest LCA (impact) score. This confirms that Grodan stone wool substrates are the most sustainable substrate solutions in the market. For growers and propagators who choose to cultivate sustainably, using Grodan substrates is the way to go.

### **Communication towards consumers**

The debate chairperson, Monique Ooms, asked Vincent Deenen, “Even though Grodan stone wool solutions are more sustainable, what about consumer perception? For a consumer, coco peat seems more natural than stone wool. How do you deal with that?” Vincent Deenen replied, “I’m not sure if consumers are that interested in the substrates vegetables are cultivated on. However, if they are, we explain that the stone wool is made from stone – a very basic element of nature. And this natural element makes it possible to grow great products, which meet consumer needs: healthy, tasty, safe and sustainably produced food. As a sector we need to make sure we can meet these needs and we need to make sure we communicate them too. Grodan explores ways to actively contribute to this.”

Next week video fragments of the debate will be published on the Grodan website under [www.grodan.com/news/grodan+news](http://www.grodan.com/news/grodan+news).

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**Corporate information:**

Grodan supplies innovative and sustainable stone wool substrate solutions for the professional horticultural sector, based on Precision Growing principles. These solutions are, amongst others, applied for the cultivation of vegetables and flowers, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peppers, aubergines, roses and gerberas. High tech stone wool substrates are offered together with tailor-made advice and tools to support Precision Growing and thus a sustainable cultivation. Sustainability plays a prominent role within Grodan, from production of Grodan substrates to end of life solutions. Grodan, founded in 1969, is active in more than sixty countries worldwide. The head office is located in Roermond, the Netherlands.

**For more information and images:**

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