



White Paper

Production Planning Beyond Spreadsheets

Using spreadsheets is not always the best solution for doing your production planning. In this paper you will learn what factors and tools you should take into consideration to efficiently manage your plant production and other resources.

"I use a spreadsheet for my production planning but it doesn't recognize that I have different requirements at different times."

Sound familiar? Over the years, we have heard repeatedly from production managers how difficult it is to use a spreadsheet for production planning. The challenge is meshing their production plans with their available space and other resources throughout the production season.

Spreadsheets excel when there are no production limits or where there is a single limit at a single point, such as space. But where limitations occur at multiple times involving multiple resources, then they have real difficulty providing a feasible plan. This is complicated further by the progressive loss of plants during the production process.

In such situations, planning can involve a complex array of factors. This begins with looking at the production process as a series of "stages" each with identified requirements and losses. This might include:

- Space requirements by production stage;
- Equipment requirements by production stage;
- Seed, cuttings, liner, and other requirements by production stage;
- Labor requirements by production stage;
- Plant losses by production stage.

Once the relevant factors are defined for each plant or plant group, then the requirements and losses can be calculated by period. On the other side are the available resources by period. By comparing requirements against available resources ... and making adjustments until you have the right fit ... you are able to come up with a feasible plan. This more detailed planning involves a good understanding of the production process and can provide a significant return on the effort involved.

Experience tells us that the following may be a source of serious challenges for your nursery...of course these aren't the only challenges, but to name a few with which proper production planning and tools can assist are:

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White Paper (cont.)

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*Building a Sales Plan,
Converting a Sales Plan into a Production Plan,
Planning Ahead for Production Constraints:*

- Space Constraints;
- Equipment capacity;
- Labor;
- Specific plant resources;
- Supplies.

Why depend on a spreadsheet when the production management tools are out there for you to use?

If you are interested in more information on an alternative approach and on how you can start with generating a “sales plan” and then converting it to a “production plan”, reply to this email and/or request a copy of a whitepaper which discusses this in more depth. This may help you decide if your production plan is feasible and provide the product mix and revenue that you desire. You don't need to be as challenged!



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