

A fifth greenhouse for Thanet Earth

Pushing forward to realise the original vision at Thanet Earth is a key priority for the partnership team behind the business. The site has proven itself time and again to be leading the UK market by delivering top quality, consistent crops of tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers.

Phase one of the construction saw three greenhouses at the site on the north coast of Kent, with their first harvests in 2009. Then in 2012 a fourth greenhouse was constructed specifically for tomato growing, its harvest beginning in 2013.

We are pleased to confirm that our fifth greenhouse is reaching completion and is shortly to be filled with young cucumber plants. This will bring us to almost 75% of our planned site in production.

To increase the production capacity for cucumbers at Thanet Earth is an important strategic decision. Looking back over the 25 years since 1990, there has been a decrease of almost 61% in the number of hectares in the UK devoted to cucumber production. Since Thanet Earth opened in 2009, there has been a 13% loss of area. Shoppers want to buy British cucumbers, but UK growers have been unable to address inefficient production methods due to the pressures of the prevailing economic climate and strong downward pressure on retail prices for cucumbers. There's still a strong demand for the product, but it has to be grown in the most efficient of settings for production to be economically viable.

We know that our state-of-the-art production system shows how it's possible to combine sustainable principles with high volume techniques. By linking grower, packer and marketer in one entity at Thanet Earth we have created a compelling customer position that works for all partners in the very short chain from greenhouse to store.

KEY FACTS Greenhouse 5 :

SIZE:	6.35ha
CHP:	Equipped with electricity generating capacity
SET-UP:	High wire growing technique for increased yield and quality.
LIGHTING:	Sodium light assisted growing
GLASS:	Diffuse glass with anti-reflection
JOBS:	Employed and seasonal opportunities for 50 more people (bringing site total to approximately 700)
HARVEST:	From January to December
WASTE:	Nothing to landfill – green waste to local farm as cattle feed and compost

As with the existing greenhouses, this new production facility will make use of rainwater capture and biological pest control to maintain the site's top tier environmental credentials. It will also increase

the electricity generating capacity of the site overall to 24MW – electricity sufficient for 30,000 homes.

Des Kingsley, the managing director at Thanet Earth, is looking forward to seeing years of planning come to fruition. “For us to be helping reverse the decline in UK production and to keep this vital industry injected with new investment is very important for Thanet Earth. Consumers much prefer to buy British-grown crops, but if the downward trend in planted area continues then we risk British cucumbers becoming the rarity and not the norm on shelf. Facilities like Thanet Earth are the future for UK salad production, with scale and efficiency at our heart. We strive to be a centre of excellence providing much needed employment and opportunity, producing market-leading salad crops every day of the year.”

The first crops from the new greenhouse are expected in January 2017.



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CONTACTS:

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For further information about the Thanet Earth site and background about the project partners, please see www.thanetearth.com

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