

Press release

Cerescon dispatches its first Sparter

The world's very first selective asparagus harvesting robot is on its way to its owner

Heeze, 27 March 2018 – The very first [Sparter](#), the selective asparagus harvesting machine developed by [Cerescon](#), is on its way to its owner. With it the Dutch high-tech startup waved out the world's very first selective asparagus harvesting robot to be sold. The machine is on its way to an asparagus company in France. The name of the machine was kept secret in the three years during which it was developed and assembled in Cerescon's factory in Heeze, Noord-Brabant.

Sparter

Cerescon created the Sparter in close cooperation with Brabant, Limburg and German asparagus growers. The selective asparagus harvesting machine can be bought in a 3-row, 2-row or 1-row model, with a harvesting reach of 50, 35 and 17 hectares respectively. All the required functions are integrated into the robot: detecting the asparagus underground while on the move, harvesting, handling the plastic foil and the sandbed repair. The way the machine detects and harvests causes less damage to the asparagus, resulting in a higher yield. The spears also don't discolour or flower. Harvesting by machine not only yields more, but also delivers a better quality of asparagus.

Future plans

Cerescon will be producing six Sparters for sale for the 2019 asparagus harvesting season. Several growers have applied for subsidies for this, and some have thus been pre-assigned. Over the following years Cerescon plans to double its production, to a maximum of 65 machines a year. Sparter sales will begin in the Netherlands, Germany and France, and Cerescon will then expand the sales to other European countries where white asparagus is grown.

Exporting outside Europe, for instance to Peru and Taiwan, is also on the cards. Ad Vermeer, inventor of the Sparter and co-owner of Cerescon: "We're still just at the very beginning of the automated selective harvest. The Netherlands is a pioneer in agricultural innovation, and we are seeing worldwide interest in what we're doing here in Heeze."

Cerescon development

Cerescon presented the first, beta version of the selective asparagus harvesting machine in the spring of 2017, developed under the firm's own control. The company was founded in December 2014, and now employs 20 staff. Last year it gained a number of national and international innovation awards.

About Cerescon

Cerescon is a young and rapidly-growing high-tech startup. Among other things Cerescon focuses on the development, production and marketing of Sparter, a selective asparagus harvesting machine. Selective harvesting is highly labour-intensive, and engaging manual labour for harvesting is becoming increasingly difficult. Horticultural firms affected by this could maintain their markets for the Netherlands and Europe through the use of robotics. More information can be found at www.cerescon.com.

For more information

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Captions:

Photo 1: Cerescon Sparter – 1-row model – [click here](#)

Photo 2: Cerescon Sparter – 1-row model with Cerescon team 2018 – [click here](#)

Photo 3: Sparter with Ad Vermeer and Thérèse van Vinken from Cerescon, on its way to the first owner - [click here](#)

Photo 4: Close-up of harvesting an asparagus with Cerescon's harvesting robot, Sparter – [click here](#)

Video: The first Sparter leaves Cerescon on its way to France – [click here](#)



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4