

# INTERNATIONAL ROUNDUP

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### **Speedier cut rose picking**

Harvesting accounts for 35 to 40 percent of total labour for glasshouse rose crops. By proper application of small changes in technique, however, it is often possible to reduce the picking and transporting time by 10 to 30%.

One simple yet effective economy suggested by J.J. van der Burg and quoted in the German trade paper Gb + GW, is by picking both sides of the path simultaneously. This can give significant savings by reducing the distance walked by the operator, particularly when the pick is small.

Work studies show that single-sided picking is faster if the pick is greater than 0.1 stems per sq. ft.

The house layout is important too and beds of 47 in. wide can reduce the harvesting time by 10 to 15%, compared with 28 in. beds, again by cutting down the walking distance.

Internal transport systems can also cut down labour input considerably but only under certain circumstances. With very light picks, carrying the cut blooms in the left arm is quicker than using either a monorail or a trolley, but if the pick is greater than 0.05 stems per sq. ft., then savings can be made.

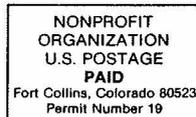
The length of the row is the most important factor, and much greater economics in labour can be made with a row length of 295 ft. than one of 148 ft. particularly if wide beds are used.

Average total labour input on a crop of Sonia yielding 18.5 stems per sq. ft. is around 6 to 7 minutes per sq. ft. per year. A combination of two-sided picking, wider beds, longer rows and an internal transport system can reduce harvesting labour by as much as 0.7 minutes per sq. ft. during a year, so knocking 10 to 12% off the annual labour bill.

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Dick Kingman, Executive Vice President  
2785 N. Speer Blvd., Suite 230  
Denver, Colorado 80211  
Bulletin 428



Dr. K. L. Goldsberry  
Dept. of Hort.  
111 Shepardson Bldg.  
Campus

Direct inquiries to:  
Office of the Editor  
Horticulture Department  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523