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By Mike Knowles

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## Industry shocked at expert's passing

Dutch group Delphy reports unexpected loss of Willem van Eldik, a well-known expert on hi-tech fruit production



Willem van Eldik has passed away at the age of 62

**W**illem van Eldik, a leading horticultural consultant specialising in high-tech berry production, has died unexpectedly at the age of 62.

Willem managed the soft fruit team as senior consultant at Delphy. His background in the fruit business was extensive, having worked for a number of major names in the Dutch fresh produce arena – including Legro, Fruitmasters, Veiling Bommel and Veiling Utrecht – during a career in the horticultural sector that spanned four decades.

The news has come as a shock to all of the colleagues and friends in the fresh produce business who knew Willem.

"Yesterday, Sunday 19 April, we were informed by the unimaginable message that our colleague Willem van Eldik died completely unexpectedly because of a heart failure," Delphy managers Ad van

Laarhoven and Klaas Walraven said in a statement.

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to the immediate family of Willem, his wife Joke and the children Chris and Renske, their partners and (grand) children and the rest of the family. An unimaginable grief strikes them."

Van Laarhoven and Walraven added: "Missing a husband, father and grandfather in such an unexpected moment and way will be difficult for them. Especially in view of the 'Corona circumstances' the suffering will be emphasised even more."

Describing Willem as a "very committed, enthusiastic and enterprising colleague", they noted that he was known to many across a large network of people in the fruit business as well as outside it.

"Willem enjoyed great fame and appreciation. In his own way of working,

communicating and tackling he managed to get many things done. This includes, for example, setting up the ISFC (International Soft Fruit Conference), initiating research into winter cultivation of blackberries, as well as the many relations, nationally and internationally, that he provided advice on.

"We will remember Willem as a warm, committed and energetic person. We pray and wish Joke a lot of strength with the children and family in coping with this great loss."

Van Eldik also contributed to the recent success of the Global Berry Congress, organised by Fruitnet, providing advice and giving talks to enhance the industry's understanding of how berries can be grown in future. He had been due to give a talk at this year's event.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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