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By Michael Barker

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## Video: Dyson's strawberry farm



Despite the lockdown work has begun preparing the land for Beeswax Dyson Farming's major new glasshouse in Lincolnshire

**W**ork has begun on a multi-million pound strawberry production site in Lincolnshire.

The facility, which is being built for Beeswax Dyson Farming - the company that controls the vast agricultural interests of entrepreneur Sir James Dyson - will enable mass indoor growing of high-quality British strawberries when completed.

Work on the six-hectare glasshouse, packaging and coldstore development in Carrington, near Boston, was scheduled to start just days after Boris Johnson announced lockdown on March 23.

East Yorkshire-based horticultural facilities specialist CambridgeHOK said that by following government guidelines at all times, planning and enforcing social distancing of workers, maintaining the highest hygiene standards and constant cleaning regimes, the project has been able to kick off on schedule.

The company has provided on-site accommodation for staff to ensure numbers of people going to and from the

site have been minimal. The development has now reached the stage where steel work will begin in June.

Louis Bradley, construction director at CambridgeHOK, said: "Like all in construction companies we faced a difficult situation, especially as we were right at the start of scheduled site preparation work on this very important project.

"It was essential for our client to not have any delay as that could lead to potentially missing a full growing season, which of course would have caused significant financial loss and possibly even threatened the overall viability of the project.

"We followed government guidelines over essential work and projects, which this is given it is British food production, and social distancing. We've also ensured that we have followed the advice of the Construction Leadership Council for firms working in lockdown to ensure we could start on site safely."

**'First of its kind'**

The new Beeswax Dyson Farming facility is being described as a first of its kind for its size, complexity, sophistication and green credentials in the UK horticulture market.

The glasshouse will include energy-saving and light pollution screens to save heat for use at night and to provide shade in the day, leading LED lighting systems and flowering lamps to aid winter production and maximise flower growth and fruit and self-sufficient water systems from rainwater harvesting across the site

Heat is generated from the current on-site anaerobic digester biogas plant, where maize and rye silage is converted into energy, stored and used as and when required in the glasshouse, enabling major energy savings.

Biogas will also be extracted, cleaned and converted into CO<sub>2</sub>, to be used to enhance the growing environment and improve crop yields inside the glasshouse.

Methane gas, which is already created by

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the anaerobic digestion process, will be used to create electricity to power the glasshouse – and power over 7,700 homes – through a specially built Combined Heat & Power (CHP) system.

The site will also be self-sufficient in terms of water usage, with the entire site harvesting rainfall to be reused in irrigation systems.

As well as the glasshouse, CambridgeHOK is constructing a 1,500 sq m packing and coldstore facility, where strawberries will be housed and made ready for collection and delivery, as well as a portal frame building which will house office staff, kitchens, and restrooms.

This video shows drone

footage of the initial ground works being carried out, including the removal of 75,000 sq m of top soil and earth grading to prepare the site for the glasshouse structure.