



Development of saline crops

Established in 1999

## Milestones

- **2004:** Focus on plant breeding, new crop development and seed production.
- **2007:** Serra Maris bvba: joint venture Intellicrops bvba and Taste of Nature Holding bv: the "sea vegetable seeds" company.
- **2009:** A product range of 10 saline crops.
- **2011:** Serra Maris bvba is 100% owned by Intellicrops.
- **2012:** Launching sea kale sprouts.

## Intellicrops BVBA

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## Innovation in Specialty Crops

Intellicrops specialises in the development of halophyte crops (salt resistant plants) through selection and plant breeding and through specialised consultancy services for the establishment of the saline crops on marginal soils. Intellicrops bvba (formerly Scrops) arose from EC research (AIR3 and Phare) and is related to the VUB research of Dr. J. Bogemans. It later grew under his leadership into a spin-off at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

"Saline crops" are still relatively unknown crops that can flourish on saline soils or areas that are irrigated by seawater. Whilst the more popular commercial crops such as wheat, corn, soya and alfalfa die off in 5g salt per litre of water, halophytes can develop optimally in conditions with a salt concentration of 25 g per litre and more.

Every year more than 10 million hectares of irrigated land are degraded because of salinity problems (in the Middle East alone this accounts for 200,000 ha). In Northern Europe saline water is upwelling near the coastal regions due to climate changes. Within the context of an ever-growing population and the limited and expensive water supply, "saline agriculture" is a valuable cultivation alternative in areas with marginal soils or saline water reserves.

On the other hand western horticulture is looking for diversification. Production cost is high and growers are looking for niche products with a higher value. With a set of "sea vegetables" and new cultivation techniques, the salty taste has been brought into our range of vegetables.

The activities of Intellicrops and subsidiaries are focused on new crop development, new product formulations and improving cultivation techniques. Through ongoing R&D activities in plant breeding we improve the current set of sea vegetables like Salicornia, Sea aster (*Aster tripolium*) *Salsola* sp, Sea beet (*Beta maritima*) *Plantago coronopus*, Sea kale (*Crambe maritima*) ...

New product formulations like the development of seakale sprouts or seed pods from *Crithmum maritimum* are brought into the market. A strong interaction between breeder and grower leads to new cultivation techniques in order to maximize yield or quality. Besides developments in food applications our R&D activities investigate the demonstration of bio based refinery products from halophytes and their value as bioenergy crops.



**'Do not forget the end user  
in the innovation pathway!'**

Joost Bogemans, CEO