

## **SURVEY OF WELSH HORTICULTURE**

What is the current state of horticulture in Wales? Are there new products and trends that suit Welsh producers and processors? And what do potential investors need to know? These are some of the questions that CALU set out to answer in a recent project for the WDA. The study, which CALU carried out with its partners in ADAS and the Welsh College of Horticulture and Madryn Consultancy, covered all sectors of commercial and amenity horticulture in Wales.

As well as studying market trends, sixty-eight interviews were carried out with producers, processors, retailers and garden centres. Three of Wales' most enterprising horticultural businesses – a tomato glasshouse nursery, a potato grower-co-operative and a retail garden centre and wholesale nursery - were also studied in more detail.

“A number of very positive messages came out of the study” said David Frost one of CALU's horticultural specialists. “Although at the moment there may be little opportunity to attract inward investment, the real opportunity is to develop Welsh horticulture by grasping opportunities such demand for local and organic food, public sector food procurement and Welsh provenance of nursery stock. One of the benefits of growing the industry we have in Wales will be to create a climate more attractive to inward investment as the industry will have more skilled labour and better branding.”

The project report makes 18 detailed recommendations covering branding, skills and labour shortages, research and market intelligence and supply chain development.

According to David Frost, “To compete successfully in a global market, Welsh horticulture needs to decide which sectors offer the most profitable opportunities and to provide resources to support them. Many of the businesses we interviewed had received grants for capital expenditure. These are very helpful, but future schemes need to focus on collaborative activity that that can position Welsh horticulture in high quality markets with innovative products and services rather than on commodity products that try to compete purely on price.”