

New Technology Report: Anglian Essential Oils

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Anglian Essential Oils Ltd. is a cooperative formed by six farmers from mid Norfolk and the Fens, an area in the east of England, that aims to establish itself in East Anglia for the production of English-character essential oils. In particular, this includes chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*). In addition, large acreage of matricaria has been harvested. A further 12 varieties of herbs are currently under trial.

On a visit to one of these farms, I was able to see the company's mobile distillation plant at work on a crop of chamomile, which had recently been harvested and rolled into bales. A mobile plant, developed by the company, is permanently mounted on a truck for transport to the member farms. This allows the crop to be distilled in situ, ensuring freshness of product, an important factor in the production of consistent-quality oils. The still can accommodate a pair of round one-ton bales that produce up to one liter of distillate each. The farmer provides a single-phase electricity supply and a main water connection. The boiler unit



Trailer-mounted distillation unit, view 1



Trailer-mounted distillation unit, view 2



Trailer-mounted distillation unit, view 3

is diesel-fired. The mobile unit incorporates a tank and a water-softening plant. Each farm also provides a small polythene-lined reservoir, allowing the heating water to cool and recycle.

Each batch of oil produced is tested at the Scottish Agricultural College (Auchincruive, Scotland) and is supplied as-distilled for fragrance, aromatherapy, medicinal and food-industry applications where appropriate. To this end, Anglian Essential Oils supplies traceability and continual laboratory certification. Crops are produced as organically as is practical.

The possibility of following a chosen crop through the whole process from field to bottle is of interest to the flavor and fragrance industries. Anglian Essential Oils welcomes visits to its members' fields and distillation plant, especially during the harvest period, to view the whole process. For more information,

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