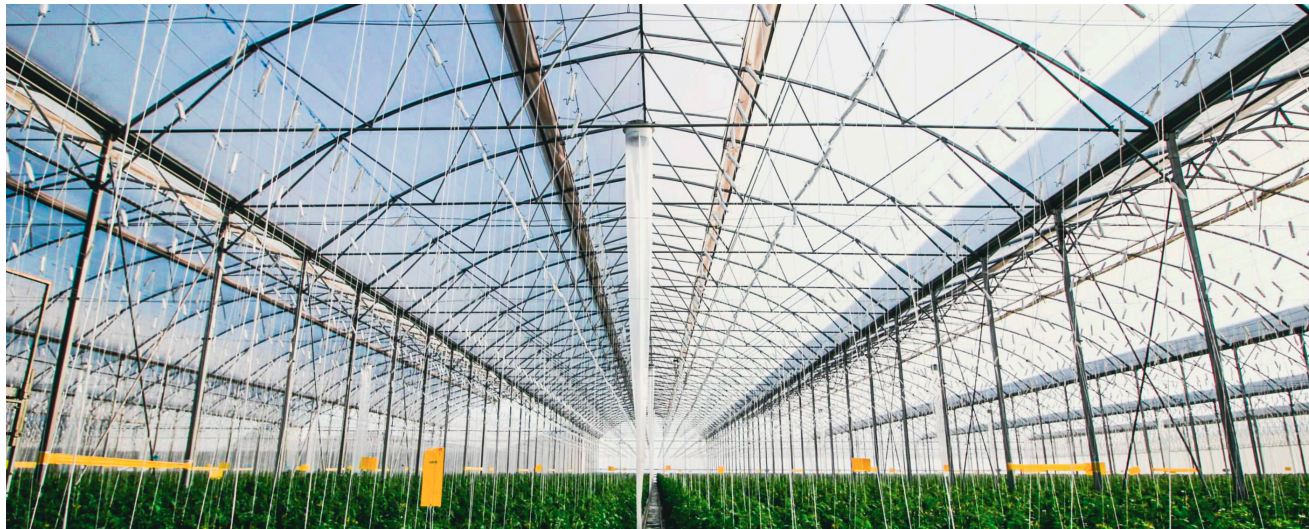


## A NEW PRODUCTION FACILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



The agricultural greenhouse market is expanding rapidly. Customers are increasingly aware of the problems associated with climate change and environmental disruption, and the France based Richel Group, which has been providing agronomic solutions in 95 countries around the world for more than 50 years, is aiming to gain new market share with new solutions based on the development of technological innovations.

Aiming to increase its production capacity, expand its product range, improve the quality of greenhouse structures, and to stand out even more from the competition, in 2022, the group purchased BLM GROUP's LT8.20 laser tube cutting system. This was not the first laser machine

purchased from BLM GROUP; a combined LT Combo tube and sheet laser cutting system is still in operation, but the need to cut metal tubes with greater precision, to expand the number of models, and to increase the efficiency of the production process drove the company toward a dedicated system that could provide greater performance in tube processing in terms of productivity and precision, and the LT8.20 perfectly meets all these requirements.

Several aspects were carefully considered when deciding on the purchase. For example, ergonomics and ease of use of the equipment which were ensured by the large control touch screen and interface software, which allow the operator

to manage the entire system with simple and intuitive controls. Remote connection through ProTube, the software that allows the office to exchange information regarding the operation of the system and offers the possibility of optimizing maintenance by planning it in time, integrating it into the production process and thus reducing downtime, and increasing efficiency in both production and maintenance. Finally, also environmental sustainability aspects such as quietness, which allows operators to work in a more pleasant environment than the sawing and drilling machines previously used.



**Integration into the production process**

The market's strong push for greater plant automation and integration has long been a topic close to BLM GROUP's heart, so it was very pleased to partner with Richel Group to add to the plant an automated unloading system that can collect finished parts and bring them together in a new bundle, ready to be delivered directly to end customer. BLM GROUP provided all the support needed to achieve the desired result from a standard Jean-Henri Brun, Process Engineer of Richel Group explains, "This was a special installation, specifically designed and built to the request and specifications of Richel Group. The result of months of planning and development inclusive of the installation and automation manufacturers working together with us in a true partnership for a long-term result."

**Product evolution and rapid prototyping**

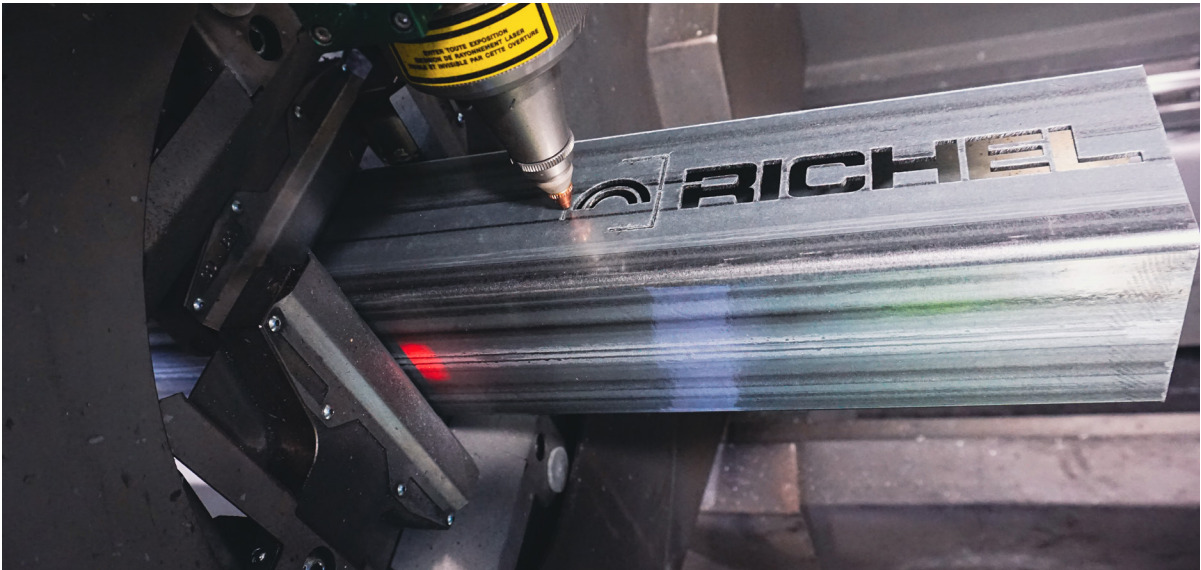
The introduction of a Lasertube system offered several opportunities for changes in the production process resulting in an improvement of its efficiency. The people from the Richel Group who participated in the training course at BLM GROUP immediately understood these opportunities, as confirmed by Eng. Brun: "To familiarize themselves with this new high-tech production tool, a team of

our employees had the opportunity to participate in a week-long training at BLM GROUP in Italy. It was an opportunity for four of our employees to learn how to use the machine, but also to discover all the possibilities offered by this new system, enabling our employees in the Design and Process Department to envision the great innovations of tomorrow." The LT8.20 is a state-of-the-art production system capable of performing an unlimited number of different machining operations on the tube. The ArTube software allows a very simple and intuitive programming of holes of any geometry, interlocking joints, and placeholder markings that make the possibilities virtually endless when creating different types of joints between components. As a result, the assembly of the different components of the greenhouse structure can effortlessly be made more reliably, faster, and easily. Rapid prototyping is an essential piece of this process, and the LT8.20 is at the heart of it, as Eng. Brun confirms, "Our R&D teams consider this machine to be a formidable rapid prototyping tool for all testing of new solutions and configurations."

**Investing to grow in all areas**

The new Lasertube is part of an investment program that is aimed at increasing production capacity, improving product quality, increasing competitiveness and

conquering new markets. Over the past five years, the Richel Group has made major investments in handling and storage facilities and in expanding the plant including equipping itself with an automated press brake and an automated tube bending machine. The investments do not neglect ESG (Environment, Social & Governance) issues, which are paramount throughout Europe. "As part of its RSE (corporate social responsibility) policy, the Richel Group confer great importance to the health and well-being of its more than 300 employees. In particular, this project aims to optimize working conditions by improving the ergonomics of machines, installing cleaner production tools (no fluid discharge, fume extraction and filtration), and installing handling equipment to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders, thus allowing operators to focus on higher value-added tasks. The greatest satisfaction remains at a human level, where we see in the team a real enthusiasm and pride in working to research and implement innovative solutions for tomorrow's agriculture. We are all thinking together about the new opportunities and perspectives we can offer our customers on five continents, providing sustainable support for their activities in all climates," concludes Stéphane Juville, Richel Group Industrial Director, with satisfaction.



INVESTMENTS AIMED  
AT *INCREASING*  
*PRODUCTION CAPACITY,*  
IMPROVE QUALITY AND  
**COMPETITIVENESS**

