

EIT Food Fight Podcast - S3 E12B - FarmForce_V2.mp3

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:00:06] Welcome to this bonus episode of The Food Fight podcast from EIT Food

Matt Eastland [00:00:11] In these episodes, we want to shine a light on new projects and agri food ups and hear about their efforts to fight for a better future. This week we're handing over to Anne Jorun Aas, to tell us about Farmforce who are improving agricultural value chains with their cloud hosted platform technologies.

Anne Jorun Aas [00:00:36] Hi, my name is Anne Jorun Aas. I'm the CEO at Farmforce. We're part of EIT Food Rising Food Stars and we're fighting for the future of food because food's first is our passion.

[00:00:51] Farmforce is an agri tech I.T. company, and our thought solutions provide organisations with a confidence to secure sustainable sourcing, improve farmer quality of life and protect the environment. We turn data into tools, which means more vetted acres, more measurable impact on communities, more financial opportunities for farmers and more clarity for customers. We believe in building a better food supply where it starts, providing the confidence that comes from knowing the facts about your food sourcing operations in the first ball. Farmforce customers span 30 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and South America, with over nine years of experience for now managing over 700000 farmers in 45 crop value chains in 15 languages on our platform.

[00:01:46] Farmforce was started by the Syngenta Foundation back in 2012 as they saw a need to make the relationship between the small holder farmer and the buyers of crops more efficient, fair and transparent. And this requires much better visibility of what's happening on the ground, which is difficult. But basically, when the Syngenta Foundation saw that this could scale, Farmforce came on Norwegian hands and became a commercial company in 2017. So since then, we have worked very much with large multinationals providing them with a product that serves their needs, also making us good. Our product consists of two components. So its the mobile app, which is basically used as the data collection tool. It is typically field staff that visits the farmers and collect that information, so it's not in the hands of the farmers themselves. But then you collect all sorts of data - farmer id, GPS position of the field, everything that happens relates to growing activities, certification status, you can create deal forecasts, information about loans, etc. and then all of that information becomes available on the other part of our product, the platform, which really provides an extensive overview of the entire sourcing operation for our customers.

[00:03:05] Farmforce provides benefits to very many of the different stakeholders, but if we start to concentrate on the buyers of the crops and the farmers, I said that MNCs and international NGOs is really our main customer base and for both it is really to manage a very complex supply chain. So for both of these, it provides a very efficient farm management software. When you are sourcing or working with thousands of buyers, it's important to know your operation. We see that traceability back to farm and field is very important. It reduces fraud it's much more difficult with a digital system, and it's also enables impact measurement because typically you have your either providing input loans or having some sort of training or anything. It's important to measure the efficacy of what you're doing. But then in doing that, it also provides benefits for the farmers, such as getting a digital identity, which enables, for example, a digital footprint when it comes to financial transactions. Management of certification, which can make access to new markets. And then I mentioned MNC's and NGO's, we're also working directly with some

cooperatives also get a comprehensive farm management tool. And, of course, for the local communities, giving them a choice for a more sustainable future. And finally, also, we should mention the consumers, it's important for the end consumers to understand the origin of the food they're eating so that they can have the true visibility into how it is produced and having the confidence in brands and products.

[00:05:00] Being part of EIT Food Rising Food Stars, I think, has several benefits for us. I mean, first of all, it's a good recognition and is always, it always feels good to be recognised as a start-up. I also think that is important in terms of motivating the entire team to find new solutions. And then we also see that it has an immense network. Quite a lot of new people have heard of us since being part of EIT Food Rising Food Stars. It's also making it much easier to reach out to them. So huge benefits of being part of that. We're very grateful for that.

[00:05:37] We would like to have 50 million farmers on the platform and to have quantified improvement on farmers livelihood and protection of the environment. And of course, also to be a sustainable and profitable company. Maybe more important than really kind of what happens with farmers is this second bullet that we actually see that we are solving and making progress on the STG's that we're working on. So we have good quantified improvement on farmers livelihood and the environmental situation for our projects. I think that's my hope for the future.

[00:06:17] I think my message then would go to all the people in this world all the end consumers, which we all are, and we need to demand transparency of the food that we're eating. There are so many unnecessary, both social and environmental costs. We need to demand to know what we're eating, how it is being produced, because that is doable and that can make a difference.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:06:45] Thanks for listening to this bonus episode of The Food Fight podcast

Matt Eastland [00:06:49] to find out more and to learn how you can get involved in the fight for a better food future. Head over to eitfood.eu/podcast and join the conversation via a #EITFoodFight on our Twitter channel @EITFood. For more information on Farmforce, head over to farmforce.com