**EIT Food Fight Podcast - S3 E6B - Faromatics V1.mp3**

**Lukxmi Balathsan** [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 agrifood start ups and hear about their efforts to fight for a better food future. This week, we're handing over to Heiner Lehr to tell us about Faromatics, a start up building robots to fine tune precision livestock farming.

**Heiner Lehr** [00:00:35] Hi, my name is Heiner Lehr and I'm the CEO of Faromatics, we are part of EIT Food Rising Food Stars and we are fighting for the future of food because we are working with chickens in order to increase their welfare and in order to sustain production of responsible chicken protein in the world.

[00:00:57] At Faromatics, we are increasing the welfare of chickens through the use of smart robotics in chicken farms. So imagine we have a robot that hangs from the ceiling, so to say, walks through the whole chicken building all the time, the whole day, 24 hours a day, watches the chickens, watches the environment of the chickens and makes sure that we detect any kind of issue anywhere in the farm, report that as soon as possible to the farmers so that the farmer can take better care of the chickens, which will in the end result in better welfare, but also in higher productivity on the farms.

[00:01:39] A long time ago, we sat together in a conference on what is called precision livestock farming. So precision livestock farming is the idea to monitor animals very closely 24/7 and tried through those observations, understand the needs of those animals and then assist farmers or others to satisfy those needs. And so we sat there, conference room with admittedly a bottle of wine and we said sensors are so expensive and how can we make that work in a farm? And then somebody said, well, and if we move the centre and everyone said, nah, you know, what a bad idea. But somehow, you know, that idea never left us. And we carried it on and it was like, it's really crazy, you know, it doesn't really make any sense. We started talking to people and they said, well, maybe it's not that crazy. And then, you know, after some time that we had heard that, we said, well, it's time now to start the company.

[00:02:36] What our robot does right now is monitor the whole environment of the chickens. So that means, you know, do they feel comfortable temperature wise? Do they have the right kind of air quality? Is the light good for the chickens, you know, for their growth? Because light has a very big impact on growth of the chickens and both on the skeleton as well as on the chickens themselves. You know, is there any stressing sounds in there? You know, are there dead chickens laying in the barn that we should better remove, you know, in order to keep it healthy and safe for the chickens? And the key thing that we do, you could say, is we actually look at the excrement of the chickens. We use artificial intelligence to find excrement and to classify them. And from this we can see early onset of intestinal diseases 24 to 72 hours before the farmer, simply because we look at about five to fifteen thousand excrement every day, which no farmer can. And that's why how we detect this so early. And, you know, with this, we can help farmers avoid problems. So we see this so early that farmers can deal with it without antibiotics. Whereas, you know, many of these outbreaks, if you see this too late, you have to use antibiotics. And that's, of course, a critical thing.

[00:03:52] Consumers are consistently showing in Europe that they're concerned with chicken welfare. Now, the farmers, the way that the industry is structured, the farmers have to have an incentive in order to increase their welfare. And we are providing this incentive because we are linking animal welfare to farm productivity. So we are demonstrating to farmers that if they look after their chickens in a better way, so more closely that this will not only increase the situation welfare for the chickens, but it will also increase their return, their monetary return. So we create an industry that has, is naturally aligned with the desire of the general population to make that animal farming more compatible with the current views on animal welfare.

[00:04:40] We are incredibly proud also to be Rising Food Star of EIT Food. EIT Food is a reference in Europe nowadays and that we are considered as a rising food star is a great honour for us. For us it helps in marketing our solution, and especially in building networks and meeting people in other areas that, let's say, are connected to us. We have by ourselves perhaps enough connections inside the poultry business, you know, our direct, let say clients. But EIT Food helps us to transcend this and to move, you know, into other areas that are equally of interest to us and that help us produce better products for the future.

[00:05:26] In the future, the livestock farming industry will switch from, let's say, protein production, you know, to actually taking good care of the animals because the interest of the animals and the interest of the farmers are actually aligned. It's just that the farmers don't know that yet or not. Many farmers know that yet. So I think there is a way to respectfully produce animal products. And we are seeing that transition happening and we are seeing that those farmers that actually embrace this respect for the animals, they actually produce better than the other ones, too. I would hope that we come to a point where consumers don't have to feel bad about consuming protein products. And while I very much respect vegetarians and vegans, I think this is a matter of choice. But we cannot say, well, you know, if you're not a vegetarian, then lets not care about the animals at all. So I foresee a much more sustainable livestock industry for the future. I think there's a lot of potential still unexplored and we hope to contribute to making that happen.

**Lukxmi Balathsan** [00:06:38] Thanks for listening to this bonus episode of The Food Fight podcast

**Matt Eastland** [00:06:42] to find out more and 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 #EITFoodFight on our Twitter channel @EITFood. For more information on Faromatics, head over to faromatics.com.