



# FarmTrace rolls out cutting-edge platform in Europe

*Start-up connects to farms to gather information on food origin*

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**US/Dutch tech start-up FarmTrace is planning a rapid rollout of its innovative technology across Europe, and is posed to do so with the acquisition of leading farm automation company VSM (parent to RUMA and Elda). FarmTrace provides insights into food value chains by collecting information starting at the farm, thereby enabling the entire chain to function more transparently and effectively.**

## Reliable and effective information sourcing

Consumer demand is rapidly changing. Modern consumers want transparency in the food they consume, and have been demonstrated to pay more for products that come from verifiably sustainable, safe farms. Food retailers and processors are scrambling to respond to these changing demands, but it's still often difficult for them to access the needed on-farm information.

FarmTrace's mission is to change this. "Thanks to our technology, consumers can know exactly where their food comes from, how it was produced, and what it contains," explains CEO and founder Chris van den Berg, "this should apply not only to the few who can afford to pay for organic foods, but to everyone."

Using widely-deployed software, FarmTrace connects to on-farm systems and isolated hardware, creating on-farm visibility for retail and food processing partners. This allows them to deliver product information to consumers, as well as segment out products from higher quality farms that would have otherwise been lost in mass production.

Retailers like Walmart and Ahold Delhaize in the Netherlands have made it clear they need this kind of technology as they push to make their entire value chain more transparent. "Creating added value in fresh products is a strategic spearhead for supermarket organizations," says Prof. Laurens Sloot of Groningen University, "However, this becomes feasible only if a product is no



longer seen as a bulk product but rather as something unique by the consumer. FarmTrace's technology makes it possible to 'create a product story' and ensure that [high-quality transparency] no longer remains the exclusive domain of premium niche products."

Barbara Baarsma, chairman of Rabobank Amsterdam, also weighed in, "Short [food value] chains connect the consumer to the farmer and result in a higher valuation of agricultural products. A player such as FarmTrace makes it possible to shorten the food chain and make it more sustainable."

### Example use cases for the FarmTrace platform in retail and processing



High level product nutrition statistics



Measurement of antibiotic and hormone usage



Measurement of environmental impact created by an individual product



Future-case: QR code and app based information provided to consumers

### Farmer upside

FarmTrace additionally helps farm supply companies (animal health, feed, genetics, robotics, etc), who also need to keep up with modern consumer trends. To stay competitive, these companies need to help farms become more sustainable and efficient, both with better farm supply products and by offering their own digital services on-farm.

More than ever before, technology is being used on farms that creates detailed records on an individual animal level. FarmTrace can connect supply companies to this information, allowing them to join the push towards more sustainable, higher quality food.



## Growing to 100,000 farms by 2025

The backbone of FarmTrace's connection to farms is their diverse service offerings to farmers themselves. FarmTrace already provides software and other services to roughly 20,000 European and American farms and this number is projected to rapidly grow to 30,000 in 2021 and 100,000 by 2025.

Farmers use a range of services provided and enabled by FarmTrace, but they retain ownership of the collected data. With permission from these livestock farmers, FarmTrace is licensed to use the information collected. This makes it possible for farmers to differentiate products in a way that rewards them for the sustainability and quality improvements they are often already making, and creates a positive feedback loop for further farm innovation.

FarmTrace's unique platform benefits every party along the food value chain



## Business-side buildout

FarmTrace has decided to start its first major rollout in Europe, but a specialized team is also hard at work in the US. Since it was first established in California in 2018, the company has garnered several million in growth capital from US investors. FarmTrace's Dutch leadership team is also now joined by American entrepreneur and investor Kelby Kleinsasser, a leading agritech expert who recently helped pioneer Farmers Business Network to unprecedented user adoption and revenue growth. Kleinsasser now serves as FarmTrace's chief operations officer.

Stage 1 Ventures based in the US has provided a large share of FarmTrace's growth capital, alongside other investment firms. The roll call of well-known Dutch investors includes names such as Marc Schröder (co-founder of Tango and Route Mobiel), Ralph de Vries (entrepreneur in food retail), and Dennis and Derk Albada Jelgersma (entrepreneurs and wine producers).



## VSM and FarmTrace merge their strengths

VSM is a Dutch farm automation company that was started 30 years ago by current manager Johan Vloet. FarmTrace and VSM both work with an extensive network farm connections, and a merger made sense to help both companies realize their shared mission on a much larger scale. The acquisition of VSM will leave the existing company structure and personnel in place, and the enterprise will continue to serve its existing customer base.

“By combining our strengths with FarmTrace, we will immediately be able to deliver much more added value in the Netherlands,” says Vloet, “we will focus our efforts on providing dairy, goat, and sheep farmers with a better revenue model, as well as increased knowledge and insight.”]

Van den Berg agrees, “We will ensure that scalable solutions are structured and implemented inline with the newest standards of the 21st-century. This will give our clients the feeling of trust and confidence that is so critical in this playing field.”

## Growing up on a dairy farm

FarmTrace CEO Chris van den Berg is the son of farmers himself, having grown up on a dairy farm in Fluitenberg, NL. It was here that he first learned the inner-workings of milk production (a major FarmTrace focus), but he soon discovered that most consumers and retailers were not as knowledgeable. The realization motivated him to pursue wide-scale transparency and connectivity as a career.

After launching a successful digital trading platform for livestock, Van den Berg decided it was time to realize this wider dream. In 2018, he moved to California to work on an automated data platform that would deliver farm details to those that needed them most. That platform became FarmTrace, and quickly scaled to a staff of 42, a number which is expected to grow even more in the coming years.

### **About FarmTrace**

**FarmTrace connects to and manages farm information for use by farm-partners across the food value chain. Their platform digitizes and integrates relevant records from farms, all the way down to the individual animal level. This enables agriculture and food companies to deliver more transparent, sustainable, and safer products at an unprecedented scale.**