



FARMERCONNECT

Area of Focus: Agricultural information

How it works: FarmerConnect is a cloud-based platform that enables any entity that is working directly with farmers to send specific crop schedule information via SMS based on the individual sowing date, crop variety, plot size and region of each farmer. Organizational users create unique profiles with this information for each farmer they are working with. Based on each farmers' profile, the system automatically sends out SMS or voice messages with specific actions to take at every point in their crop cycle in accordance with India's Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). The system also sends out local weather updates, market alerts, innovations, public schemes, and other information, which are automatically fetched through the web using RSS feeds.

In addition to pre-set messages based on the GAP, organizational users can also design their own scheduled messaging or send messages manually to select users. Organizational users can also edit the pre-set schedule to account for any variables that may impact the timing of action, such as an outbreak of pests or unexpected weather.

Technology used: Mobile phones, SMS, computers, cloud-based database

Implementer/Funder: FarmerConnect is funded by Sunera Technologies Inc., a Michigan-based company that has operations in both the US and India. Sunera has funded the entire development effort and continues to fund ongoing operations.

Fees: Use of the system is free to farmers, although organizational users pay per SMS, for premium services (such as polling and analytics), and for any platform customization.

Primary Markets: South Asia

Users: As of August 2012, over 70,000 farmers in South Asia were being served by FarmerConnect.

Business Model: FarmerConnect operates on a freemium model. Access to the cloud-based platform is free, with additional fees charged to organizational users seeking premium services and customization.

Impact: As a relatively new service, there have not yet been any formal impact assessments done on the service to date. Anecdotally, though, farmers using the service are benefiting from improved access to timely and specific GAP messages during the current planting season.

For more information visit: <http://www.farmerconnect.org>

Sources: Information provided by Sreenivas Maganty, Director of FarmerConnect, on 9/7/12

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