

FARMFORCE

Area of Focus: Outgrower management

How it works: Farmforce is a web and mobile-based outgrower management tool that was launched by the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture in May 2013, after 20 months of development, prototyping, and field testing in Kenya and India. At its core, Farmforce enables field officers to manage every farmer they work with by creating geo-referenced 'virtual farms' including field information and crop cycles. Data is collected in the field by mobile app, and then synchronized with the web-based server whenever network coverage exists. By aggregating the information of multiple farmers into planting campaigns, field officers can track growing activities, forecast yields, and manage compliance with food and sustainability standards by facilitating the documentation of pest and disease incidence and treatment. The system can also be used to batch and trace harvests, conduct productivity comparisons, and has an API for integration with other enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions. Supervisors can also use the platform to assign staff roles and responsibilities, and to monitor progress. In combination with a mobile printer, it can also print receipts in the field, as well as sending SMS confirmations directly to the farmer's phone.

In addition to the core features, Farmforce also offers several expansion apps. These include a communications app for sharing information with field officers and farmers, an inventory app to track movement of goods, an accounts app to manage loan information, a training app to manage trainings and track attendance, and a survey app to create custom surveys and assessments.

Technology used: Android smartphones, SMS, computers, cloud-based database, mobile printers

Implementer/Funder: Farmforce was developed by the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture with additional funding from the Swiss Government.

Fees: Farmforce users pay subscription costs based on the number of modules used, number of staff users, and number of mobile handsets entered in the system. Subscription fees include cloud hosting and support, with additional implementation charges based on client need.

Primary Markets: Asia, Africa, and Latin America

Users: The primary users are agribusinesses that are working with outgrower schemes, horticultural exporters, and agricultural processors.

Business Model: Farmforce operates on a subscription-based Software as a Service (SaaS) model. They estimate that the revenue generated from user fees will cover the ongoing costs and make the service profitable over the long term.

Impact: Given its relatively recent launch, any impact to date is still anecdotal. They plan to conduct a more robust evaluation of its impact in the coming years.

For more information visit: <http://farmforce.com/>

Sources: Information provided by Fritz Brugger and Spencer Morley, Farmforce, in July/August 2013

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