

## Silicon Valley-based FarmWise Collaborates With Roush To Manufacture Autonomous Robots In Michigan



DETROIT, Mich., March 27, 2019 — Highlighting Michigan’s deep history and expertise of manufacturing and ecosystem for emerging tech companies, FarmWise and Roush announced today a collaboration to develop and test autonomous vegetable weeders in the state of Michigan.

The initial contract between [FarmWise](#) and [Roush](#) includes the development of a dozen of prototypes of the self-driving robots in 2019, with scaling to additional units in 2020.

Thomas Palomares, co-founder and chief technology officer of Silicon Valley-based startup FarmWise, said there are many reasons why his company chose the Michigan manufacturer Roush to develop its autonomous robots.

“Michigan is well-known throughout the world for its manufacturing and automotive industries, the advanced technology expertise and state-of-the-art manufacturing practices,” Palomares said. “These are many of the key ingredients we need to manufacture and test our machines. We were connected to Roush through support from PlanetM, and as a technology startup, joining forces with a large and well-respected legacy automaker is critical to support the scale of our manufacturing plan.”

As growers are looking for new ways to optimize crop production, FarmWise leverages the latest advances in artificial intelligence and robotics to offer plant-level farming as-a-service.

Based in San Francisco, FarmWise creates adaptable machinery to help farmers increase productivity, grow healthier crops, and make food production more economically and environmentally sustainable.

The autonomous farming robots are providing high-precision weeding and thinning with the ability to replace herbicides, save cost on labor and increase yield. They will also work reliably around the clock, 24/7, and adapt seamlessly to different crops, improving farming efficiency altogether.

“Technology is rapidly transforming every industry across the globe,” said Roush CEO Evan Lyall. “The agricultural industry may be one of the most in need to make bold new advances to create efficiencies and produce safer products for consumers. We work with the best engineers to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-life products as we test these tractors in the field. We’re proud to support industry pioneers like FarmWise to solve the burning issues farmers face while building the new paradigm for the future of food production.”

The journey of FarmWise started when Palomares, who is the grandson of French farmers, connected in college with Sébastien Boyer, co-founder and CEO, and realized they had a similar goal: to provide farmers with a cost-effective alternative to pesticides for the health of the farmer, consumer and the environment. After volunteering on small rural vegetable farms on the East Coast, interviewing dozens of different farmers and learning the difficulties impacting today’s vegetable growers and how new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, would help overcome them and increase overall yields, Palomares and Boyer relocated to the Bay Area, to work with other top engineers to develop the best solutions for farmers.

Yet, when the time came to mass develop their autonomous robots, they chose Michigan.

“This collaboration showcases the opportunities that result from connecting startups like FarmWise with Michigan-based companies like Roush that bring their manufacturing know-how to making these concepts a reality,” said Trevor Pawl, group vice president of PlanetM, Pure Michigan Business Connect and International Trade at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. “We are excited to see this collaboration come to fruition. It is a great example of how Michigan can bring together emerging companies globally seeking prototype and production support with our qualified manufacturing base in the state.”

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#### About FarmWise

Founded in 2016, FarmWise builds adaptive robots for agriculture. Supported by a team of 20 farming and AI experts from MIT, Stanford and Columbia, the company develops autonomous machines to farm every single plant for greater yield, better farmer’s profits and a healthier environment. FarmWise’s current robots tackle the automation of weeding on vegetable farms, a chemical and labor intensive task. The company is supported by private funding and collaborate with growers in the development of its products.

### About Roush

Roush, a subsidiary of Roush Enterprises, Inc., is a full-service product development supplier headquartered in Livonia, Michigan. Since 1976, the company has grown to more than 4,000 employees in facilities located throughout North America, Europe and Asia. Named a Crain's Detroit Fast 50 in 2018, Roush is widely recognized for providing engineering, testing, prototyping and manufacturing services to the mobility, aerospace, defense and theme park industries. Other corporate subsidiaries include Roush Performance, developer and manufacturer of performance vehicles and products for the automotive aftermarket; and Roush CleanTech, developer and manufacturer of alternative fuel systems for the fleet vehicle market.

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