**Date: 19/11/21**

**Serial, multi-sector entrepreneur supports agrifood tech start-ups**

Agrifood technology start-ups involved in the Farm491 incubation hub are beginning to think very differently about the products and service models for the future of agriculture as a result of input from a highly disruptive entrepreneur.

Ben Jones and a close-knit group of friends, founded, built and then sold two extremely successful businesses, for a total of £250m, to Unilever and Nestle. Since moving to his base in Gloucestershire from London, he has been keen to support the huge potential that he sees for start-ups in the farming and food sector.

Ben co-founded two businesses that filled niche gaps - the healthy snack company, Graze and a bespoke dog food business, Tails; he says that he sees huge potential for agrifood tech.

The factors that have made his own start-ups succeed will be crucial for tech companies competing for market position and funding.

“Things that have been important to us in founding our own businesses have been staying curious and embracing naivety,” he says. “When we started Graze, we had no experience in food, but saw a gap in the healthy snack market which, at the time, was dominated by ‘tricksy’ marketing of ‘healthy’ snacks that were laden with sugar.

“For Tails, a chance insight from an animal nutritionist sparked the business idea, which was that from a variety of basic kibble recipes, we could feed every dog in the UK, whatever their dietary need,” he added.

He describes his business partnership as an alchemy between friends who are still exactly the same as they were when they were kids at school. “Importantly, there is complete trust between us, we instinctively know where our competences lie and there is never any ego in the room. Added to this, we all shared the same vision.”

Ben’s experience to date will give members of the Farm491 community exceptional advice on how to gear a business to lucrative market needs, to clearly define the offer and to raise adequate finance for the phases of growth.

Ben is supporting a number of businesses in the sector including Field and Flower, a Somerset-based online retailer that supports independent British farmers and fishermen who rear their animals slowly, sustainably and to high welfare standards.

Founded by agricultural college friends James Flower and James Mansfield out of their Home Farm base near Gordano, the duo has built up from their starting point of 30 beef boxes from one animal to supplying meat, dairy and prepared foods from a range of dominantly south-west based suppliers.

Ahead of a series of sessions with Ben Jones for Farm491 members, the incubation hub is welcoming new members who’d like to get involved with these online events. Membership levels vary and give businesses access to the facilities at the newly built Farm491 hub, business support and introductions to investors, as well as hot-desking and resident business status. Membership costs start at £80/month.

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**Notes to editors**

Farm491 is a UK based leading technology incubator and innovation space focused on the future of farming and food systems. Based and owned by the Royal Agricultural University we work with entrepreneurs through all their stages of growth, leveraging our unique network of academic, industry and farming contacts and in house experts to help companies achieve their aspirations. This is primarily achieved through strategic advice, support raising investment, finding the right talent to build the team, access to new customers and being part of a network of other entrepreneurs. Farm491 is also involved in local and national policy on AgriTech and works with national and international partners to help reduce the fragmentation in the UK innovation ecosystem.

[www.farm491.com](http://www.farm491.com)