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Harvesting Farmer Network raises $4 Mn from Social Capital

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Harvesting Farmer Network (HFN), a leading agriculture technology platform in India, has raised $4 million from Social Capital, a Silicon Valley-based technology investment firm managed by Chamath Palihapitiya. This is the first institutional round raised by HFN, which will be used to reach more than 120 million smallholder farmers across India, as well as explore opportunities in Indiaâ??s rural markets.

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HFN helps smallholder farmers (defined by the UN as a farmer owning less than 2 hectare of land) in India to increase their income by empowering them with a collective bargaining platform. Through HFNâ??s platform, farmers are able to buy farm inputs, access financial services such as loans and insurance, as well as sell their crops to national and international customers enabling them to scale and grow their businesses.

Founded by Ruchit Garg during COVID-19, HFN was created to reduce the friction between farmers and buyers, initially by enabling them to connect directly on Twitter. Since then, more than $500 million of crops, consisting of over 360 crop varieties, have been listed on HFNâ??s digital platform from every state across India. These crops have been sold domestically as well as to international markets. A global agricultural powerhouse, India produces more than $275 billion of crops annually.

As of August 2022, more than 3.7 million farmers are digitally connected to the HFN platform, witnessing a 2.5X increase in their crop earnings. Recently, many forward-thinking farmers have even launched offline centres known as â??HFN Kisan Centresâ?• to help fellow local farmers sell their crops and buy staple inputs such as seeds and fertiliser at affordable prices.

Ruchit G Garg, Founder CEO of HFN, said: â??At HFN, our goal is to help farmers realise their full potential by reducing the plethora of inefficiencies across the agriculture value chain. Simple and widely-available technologies like WhatsApp and Twitter have allowed us to create massive data-driven farmer co-operatives, which allows farmers to negotiate better rates for farm inputs and more competitive prices for outputs.â?•

Jay Zaveri, Partner at Social Capital, said: â??India is one of the bread baskets of the world and weâ??re excited to partner with HFN to bring a safe, secure, and empowering platform to the more than 120 million smallholder farmers across India. Our goal is to enable Indian households to access high-quality farm produce and for farmers to build a profitable livelihood through HFN.â?•

HFN plans to use the new funding to rapidly expand its footprint across India, and over the next 12 months, it expects to connect farmers in every single one of Indiaâ??s 708 districts across the country.