



## *Farmforce Case Study: Kütaş Herbs & Spices*

*Global leader in oregano leverages Farmforce to efficiently manage organic and Rainforest Alliance certifications to supply McCormick*

### ***Kütaş – Global Leader in Mediterranean Herbs***

As the world's largest producer of pure oregano, a majority of the global market, and a leader in processing Mediterranean herbs for over 20 years, Kütaş focuses on their strong sourcing relationships to reliably increase high-quality supply. Working up the value chain with small and medium scale farmers, Kütaş implements good agricultural practices and has organic, GLOBALG.A.P. and Rainforest Alliance certifications to meet the quality and sustainability specifications for buyers like **McCormick & Company**. With global demand increasing and additional certification pressure with sourcing from hundreds of local smallholder farms, Kütaş sought a solution to expand its certified farmer base whilst at the same time more efficiently and effectively manage their growing operations.

**McCormick & Company** is the global leader in flavor, manufacturing and distributing spices across the entire food industry with \$5.3 billion in annual revenue. **McCormick** has successfully collaborated with Farmforce's mobile and web smallholder farmer management solution, introducing scalable and transparent digital management to key suppliers across Africa and Asia. As their herb and spice suppliers scale to meet global demand, **McCormick** sees Farmforce as a valuable software tool for managing farmer sourcing. Benefits to the suppliers include accurate yield forecasting, the ability to plan agronomic trainings, first mile traceability and documented compliance with international standards including organic and Rainforest Alliance certification, as well as McCormick's own policy on sustainable agriculture. In 2015, McCormick facilitated a meeting between Kutas and the Farmforce team.

### ***Managing Traceability Challenges***

When the Farmforce team first met with Kütaş' senior management and field staff, the herb and spice processor clearly explained their current strategy for tracing all raw materials from



*Kütaş field staff recording grower information on paper in the field*

the grower to the Kütaş processing facility. A commitment to traceability, as a critical part of food safety standards, was at the heart of Kütaş' efforts.

As with most sourcing companies, each step from meeting with farmers in the field and purchasing raw herbs and spices, to transporting the bags to processing facilities, was managed with paper documentation. Information was often recorded and cross-checked to ensure uninterrupted traceability – a manual and time-consuming task. While their system was functioning as a traceability tool, Kütaş realized as they grew their smallholder supplier base that they needed more robust, integrated tools that could also track all activities happening in the farmers' fields. Their days of paper-based 'smallholder identification forms', which required reentry into their Excel-based system, needed to be replaced by a robust digital solution.

### ***Benefiting from a Digital Traceability System***

Supporting Kütaş' already professional management and farmer sourcing systems, Farmforce integration was a smooth process. The Farmforce team thoroughly reviewed current processes from field level engagements to deliveries to the Kütaş processing facilities, ensuring seamless transition from paper-based to the digital mobile application and web solution. Kütaş has realized significant changes and improvement in several aspects of their operations:

#### **Effective Engagements at the Farmer**

**Level** – The field teams at Kütaş have found that using the mobile application on a regular basis to work one-on-one with farmers has fostered a closer relationship and has encouraged loyalty from the growers. When recording farming chemical and fertilizer applications, field agents can now give farmers more direction and instruction since the application has a notice on the screen if the entered amount of chemical is over the limit pre-specified in the system. Field staff reporting this feedback immediately is appreciated by farmers and also enables Kütaş to have better



*Turkish small and medium scale farmers producing for Kütaş, and registered on Farmforce*

knowledge of the amount of oregano that can be collected without concern on chemical residue levels. As Kütaş entered more and more farmers into the system, they realized the advantages for yield forecasting – with GPS field records showing field size and crop grown, they can now more easily and accurately project yields for each region.

**Multi-Functional Database** – Throughout the data migration process from their old system to using Farmforce's web interface on a daily basis in the main office, Kütaş has expressed that the dynamic database functionality has been a key benefit of the system. With all field data collected and synchronized over the mobile network, Kütaş easily groups farmers based on certifications, specific areas or other criteria and creates custom reports for management in alignment with company reporting KPIs. Based on these groupings, Kütaş can send out custom bulk SMS messages to sub-groups

of farmers, related to a local training opportunity, upcoming certification survey or details on harvest collection. A critical key sorting functionality is on agrochemical usage, now Kütaş can sort data to cross check product test results on the oregano when it reaches their processing facilities. Satellite image mapping of farmers' fields and photos of individual farmers with their details also helps with sourcing visualization and information customization.

**Paper-free Certification Audits** – With Kütaş' premium herb positioning, having up-to-date organic and Rainforest Alliance farm certification is critical to their market position. When sourcing from individual smallholder farmers, conducting farmer and field level audits for compliance used to be a tedious paper-based process. Now Kütaş' field staff create customized surveys to ensure audit compliance with farmers, or use the pre-built Rainforest Alliance certification survey to collect data and photos from farmers. All information is then automatically uploaded in the format required for use by the auditing organization. Kütaş also uses the Farmforce survey functionality to collect information on other specific topics relevant for their internal data collection audits.

### ***Expanding Farmforce Use for Kütaş and McCormick***

Building on the success over three years with sourcing of oregano, Kütaş is now looking to implement Farmforce to support their sourcing of sage from Turkish growers. The ease of database-supported record keeping has enabled management and field staff to spend more time on other critical business processes and further growing their market positions, while providing their customers with transparency data. **McCormick** has also expanded its collaboration with Farmforce to additional suppliers in new geographies, a step towards a fully digital and completely transparent supply chain within their global herbs and spices portfolio.



*Kütaş field staff using the Farmforce mobile application to record Rainforest Alliance certification survey responses*

*Farmforce strives to build trust and transparency in the agricultural first mile. We deliver digital solutions to secure sustainable sourcing, improve farmer quality of life and protect the environment. Through a bush-proof web and mobile platform, refined over eight years, clients have visibility down to the field level while building a fully traceable supply chain. Farmforce is used by clients in 32 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, managing 520,000+ farmers in 45 crop value chains. The Farmforce platform is available in 15 languages. For more information visit [www.farmforce.com](http://www.farmforce.com) or contact us at [info@farmforce.com](mailto:info@farmforce.com)*

<sup>i</sup> McCormick Sustainable Agriculture Policy. McCormick Company Website. 2017. <http://www.mccormickcorporation.com/Our-Commitment/Sustainable-Production/Sustainable-Agriculture-Policy>