



By Mike Knowles

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Fruitbox 65 · Michele Dall'Olio, Fresh4cast



How can artificial intelligence help fresh produce companies to predict the future more accurately?

Artificial intelligence can now be used to predict the future with unprecedented accuracy.

That's good news for companies in the fruit and vegetable business, where the products' sheer unpredictability in terms of yield and shelf-life remains the industry's biggest inherent challenge.

Michele Dall'Olio, chief operating officer Fresh4cast, says companies have started to unlock the big potential that AI offers. In particular, he says, greater predictability means greater profitability.

"Being able to see into the future, and have a good understanding of what happened in the past, brings you multiple benefits," he tells Chris White during the latest episode of Fruitnet's conversation series Fruitbox.

Fresh4cast has pioneered the introduction of AI-based yield forecasting software over the past

decade, and in doing so has enabled suppliers of items like berries and tomatoes to fine-tune their operations by making them more predictable.

"If you think about the medium to long-term time horizon, this can help you avoid potential shocks to your supply chain, or help you leverage better an opportunity that the market presents – like for example by arranging a promotion or organising your pickers for next season."

There are also short-term benefits, he continues. "You can, for example, manage your workforce better in the packhouse. Or you can arrange an alternative sales channel to avoid wastage, in case you have an overstock of a product."

Dall'Olio is keen to dispel some of the myths around artificial intelligence. "AI is not that sentient being that all the sci-fi movies are telling us about. It's a smart

piece of software that is very good at performing large amounts of relatively simple and easy tasks," he observes. "AI is a tool that allows you to perform multiple tasks with exponential ease."

Hosted by Chris White in London, Fruitbox now attracts a big audience across the global fruit and vegetable business that tunes in every week to hear exclusive interviews and expert analysis. Produced by Fruitnet Media International, the show is essential listening for everyone in the fresh produce industry.

All previous episodes of Fruitbox can be found on any of the following podcast services:

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