



By Tom Joyce

Tuesday 28th April 2020, 16:10 GMT

Red Sea Farms teams with Kirchner Group

A collaboration between Red Sea Farms and Kirchner Group is set to commercialise research into the production of fresh produce in water-scarce regions



Red Sea Farms co-founders Mark Tester and Dr Ryan Lefers

Saudi saltwater agriculture specialist Red Sea Farms has announced a collaboration with merchant banking firm Kirchner Group to enable the local production of fresh fruit and vegetables in regions of the world with scarce supplies of fresh water.

Thanks to its four decades of experience in operational, transactional and asset management activities in the agriculture sector, Kirchner Group has reportedly been helping Red Sea Farms to evaluate potential strategic partnerships, develop growth channels, attract talent and prepare for future fundraising activities.

Following six years of research at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Red Sea Farms has developed saltwater-tolerant crops and saltwater-based greenhouses,

as well as starting the initial development phase of a permanent R&D centre in Thuwal, Saudi Arabia. An initial commercial-scale operation with partners in the region is apparently in the pipeline.

“As we accelerate the commercialisation of our research we are pleased to tap into the Kirchner team’s 100-plus years of agricultural business development experience,” said Mark Tester, co-founder of Red Sea Farms. “We look forward to leveraging the entire Kirchner team as we advance into an exciting phase of growth and impact.”

“KAUST is very pleased to see this partnership,” added Dr Kevin Cullen, KAUST’s vice-president for innovation and economic development. “Kirchner Group, with their outstanding business development experience,

complements very well the scientific skills of the Red Sea Farms co-founders, helping this very promising start-up accelerate rapidly to become a significant international company.”

Kirchner Group’s Steve Dauphin commented: “The technologies being developed and deployed by Red Sea Farms today have the potential to positively impact numerous food-insecure regions of the world in the coming years – financially, environmentally and nutritionally. Red Sea’s mission is also consistent with our firm’s commitment to global food security. We are excited to be working with them as they continue their growth and begin to expand internationally.”