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By Mike Knowles

Thursday 15th October 2020, 0:01 GMT

## ***Infarm could supply more fruit and veg***



During FPJLive and ahead of its Whole Foods tie-up, the group's UK operations director confirmed its ambitious plan

**U**rban farming specialist Infarm is investigating the possibility of expanding its product offer beyond leafy salad vegetables and herbs to include a number of other fresh fruit and vegetables, Fruitnet understands.

The company, which today announced a new partnership with Whole Foods Market in the UK following similar deals with Selfridges, Farmdrop and Marks & Spencer, wants to help solve the challenge of feeding a growing global population in the years to come by bringing vertical farms to cities, and the fact that it recently attracted US\$170m in investment suggests it is well on the way to doing so.

It recently raised US\$170m in funding to expand its network, which it predicts will cover 5m sq ft of vertical farms by 2025.

Speaking at last week's FPJLive, UK operations director Jeremy Byfleet said

the group would continue to expand its list of partners to include retailers, schools, hospitals, manufactures and other institutions to secure better year-round food supply while using fewer resources and less land.

"If I take London as an example, it's a huge city with green spaces but actually most of the products that consumers in London eat travels many, many miles," he said. "Infarm really wants to change that. Not necessarily to disrupt the supply chain, but to make the supply chain a lot shorter so that fresher produce is available on tap to local people."

Going forward, Byfleet said the group could potentially expand beyond its existing product focus, which is mainly lettuces, herbs and microgreens. "We've got an R&D team looking at future options and we are working very hard on this ambition of growing a much bigger fruit and veg basket for the future," he revealed.

"I think the combination of the technologies that we use and how we operate our business, with the funding that we've got and the ability to scale, give us the ability to distribute products widely to a lot of people when they come to market. So I think there is definitely strong potential there and I don't think it's too difficult to achieve."

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