Agrimetrics Data Platform; Harnessing and merging big data

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Abstract

One of four UK Government-funded Agri-Tech Innovation Centres, Agrimetrics is expressly charged with the task of harnessing the power of new and growing sources of data; popularly known as Big Data. Its activity is focused on harvesting individual sources of data and bringing them together to create value for the agricultural and food industry. This added value will be derived from producing information rich datasets that could not exist due to a number of existing issues, not least of which is the competitive nature of information supply in the sector. There are many players whose main business centres around data e.g. breed Societies, milk recording organisations, and performance recording companies. Others have data as a significant part of their business e.g. abattoirs, tag manufacturers, and retailers. Further, organisations not generally associated with exploiting data are now recognising the value of their datasets including veterinary networks and feed companies. The objective of Agrimetrics is to organise data, harvest new data, create new data from merged datasets and then to facilitate users to create value (insights) from that merged data that doesn't already exist. To this end, Agrimetrics is creating a Data Platform, where organisations right across the agri-food sector will be able to access the data: the aim being for existing, and yet-to-be-formed, companies to add value to their products and research by incorporating additional information into their existing datasets. This is not without its challenges – existing data collectors and processors already have good businesses. How will Agrimetrics add value? It is clear that the main question is why? Why would retailers expose their business sensitive data to farmers? Why would farmers donate their own data for exploitation by others? The answer is in the fact that the data has orders of magnitude higher value when intelligently assembled into information vaults. So perhaps the question then becomes how?

Keywords: big data, Agrimetrics, merged datasets, information