

Sadarah Partners with iFarm to Advance the Next Generation of Sustainable Vertical Farming in Qatar

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Sadarah (Qatar), owner of Agrico Organic Farm, and iFarm, a Finland-headquartered AgTech company with operations in Russia, Europe and globally, joined forces to build and collaboratively manage a commercial-scale indoor farm based on iFarm's latest vertical farming technology in the State of Qatar. The multi-year partnership will optimize the growing of leafy greens, strawberries, and edible flowers and help ensure a steady year-round supply of fresh produce to the tables of Qatari people.

"This partnership brings one of the world's most advanced vertical farming technologies to our country. Combining Agrico and iFarm's capability will deliver consumers even more of the freshest produce on the same day," said Mr Ahmed Hussain Al-Khalaf, Chairman of Sadarah/Agrico. "Strawberries and most lettuce varieties are now 100% imported and in many cases of a low quality and lacking freshness. Once the development is ready we will jointly be delivering the freshest strawberries and lettuces available anywhere in the world."

The first phase of the Sadarah-iFarm partnership involves developing a commercial trial farm at Sadarah's Agrico Farm in Al Khor, Qatar. This will be the first deployment in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council of an AI-managed vertical farm that uses drones to monitor crop health and manage yields. Thus, combining Agrico's know-how and technology for farming in arid environments with iFarm's state-of-the-art vertical farming solution will enable to improve the quality of crops and to maximize the yield in one of the world's harshest environments.

The second phase of the joint project entails commercial distribution of the produce to the local Qatar market and the expansion of the vertical farming technology to other farms in Qatar and its regional neighbours. Both Sadarah and iFarm are focused on delivering the most flavourful, nutritious, fresh leafy greens, strawberries, and edible flowers at any time throughout the year. The partnership will also help Qatar reduce its heavy reliance on food imports and bring the country closer to achieving the goal of reaching a 70% self-sufficiency in food production by 2023, as outlined in Qatar's National Food Security Strategy.

"Vertical farming is a key to boosting food security in Qatar, where conventional agricultural production is extremely challenging due to the country's hot and arid climate. We are excited to tap into Agrico's long-standing expertise in the region and work together toward helping Qatar achieve its ambitious goals of food independence", said Kirill Zelenski, CEO of iFarm - Intellectual Farm, OY. "I believe that it's the beginning of a long-term and fruitful collaboration. The role of iFarm won't be limited to simply supplying equipment and software at the construction phase, but we will help oversee the farm after it's up and running and provide support to our partners in managing iFarm's cutting-edge technology."

Qatar-Russia Investment and Trade Advisory (QRITA) acted as an advisor in establishing the partnership and will continue to work with iFarm and Sadarah to develop their joint venture further.

Oleg Chizh, Managing Director and CEO of QRITA, said: "We are pleased to facilitate the integration of the advanced agricultural technology by iFarm into the food security framework in Qatar and the MENA region, in partnership with Sadarah - one of the leading diversified conglomerates in the region, with a long-standing history in the food and agriculture space. This is consistent with QRITA's mission to enable impactful cross-border partnerships between the Russia/CIS and GCC regions. We look forward to supporting the partners in launching this pilot project and, hopefully, many subsequent projects. We are honored to contribute to promoting sustainable urban farming in Qatar."

About Sadarah LLC (Qatar): Established in 2005, Al Sadarah Group has established itself as one of the leading family-owned conglomerates in the region. A business enterprise built around traditional family values and an uncompromising commitment to integrity, premium service and social responsibility. Al Sadarah Group has created new benchmarks of excellence within its diverse portfolio which has grown to include ventures in F&B, real estate development, education, constructions, engineering, and investment.

About iFarm — Intellectual Farm, OY (Finland): Established in 2017, iFarm provides innovative technologies for growing fresh greens, berries and vegetables. iFarm has farms operating and under construction in Europe, Middle East, Russia and CIS, with a total planting area of more than 30.000 m². iFarm technologies are recognized worldwide: the project is included in the TOP 500 food startups of the world and is a member of the EIT Food Accelerator Network.