

Growth and vision at  
Agro Food Park

Connecting companies with  
talent at Career Space

# STORIES

Cordulus: Danish weather  
technology goes global

Ten years of entrepreneurship  
at Agro Food Park



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# STORIES

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# PREFACE

ANNE-MARIE HANSEN  
Director

## Welcome to Agro Food Park Stories

Some hundred companies are based at Agro Food Park and 1,500 people work here. That's quite a number. Although we consist of many different companies, we all share a link with the agriculture and food industry, and we are all connected here – at Agro Food Park – in an attractive setting close to Aarhus city centre.

This magazine provides an introduction to the companies at Agro Food Park. Even though we work nearby to each other, we do not always know what our neighbours elsewhere in the building are doing. We want to foster a stronger sense of community, as well as collaboration, network-building, and knowledge-sharing.

Agro Food Park Stories is the title of our new magazine. We aim to offer insights into the innovative community that makes up Agro Food Park. We look inside companies and tell their stories through people-centred portraits. This first edition of Agro Food Park Stories reflects the diversity of companies at Agro Food Park: from small start-up enterprises to established businesses. All began life at Haystack, Agro Food Park's start-up environment.

Over the past fifteen years, the community here has shifted its focus to the global challenges of health and sustainability. In doing so, new areas of cross-sector collaboration have emerged. For example, organic matter from the farming industry now plays a key role in green energy production. The food industry is increasingly involved in the prevention and cure of lifestyle diseases. In the future, therefore, Agro Food Park will grow to accommodate companies in a wider range of relevant fields. You can read more about this and much more in the magazine.

We hope you enjoy reading the magazine.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Marie L".

Anne-Marie Hansen



## In the footsteps of Cordulus

Cordulus is located in a high-ceilinged room at the top of 13 Agro Food Park. A large window opens on to the undulating landscape and towns beyond. In the field below, the whir of weather stations can be heard – the mainstay of the company’s business. To the right runs a light railway, where the speed of passing trains symbolises the rapid growth of Cordulus since its founding in 2015.



*“When it comes to the weather, our product is useable elsewhere”*

John Smedegaard, CEO Cordulus



**B**eginning with five friends at university who created a prototype of a satellite data source that could be used to analyse a field’s biological data, the company now has 23 employees and supplies hyperlocal weather data to farmers.

#### The journey

The year is 2015. Having formed a study group, the same five friends win the ESA Space Camp competition.

John Smedegaard, Managing Director and one of the five founders of Cordulus, explains how the focus shifted early on from analysing field data to weather data, now the focal point of the company:

*“Our group was interested in exploring what space data could be used for and we were invited to the Netherlands, to ESA, where they build spaceships. From there, we worked on creating a satellite data source. We looked at reflected light to see how it affects field crops. We researched whether we could use our modelling expertise combined with the data source to tell us something about fields. During that process, we discovered that we needed weather data to create our first prototype.”*

Cordulus was established at Agro Food Park in 2019, on the recommendation of a former mentor during the company’s start-up phase in Aarhus. Initially, the company was affiliated to the incubation environment at Agro Food Park.

*“We can operate our test facilities from here. We have established several weather stations around the countryside that we use to test our models and software, which we wouldn’t be able to do in Aarhus itself. It’s great to have an office so close to Aarhus and have some large open spaces that we use a great deal,”* says John Smedegaard.

In 2023, the company changed its name from FieldSense to Cordulus. The change marked the company’s development into an established business at Agro Food Park with customers in several countries. The name change was also a tribute to the work of Danish meteorologist and DMI founder, Niels Henrik Cordulus Hoffmeyer, who was a pioneer in the collection and systematisation of meteorological observations, in whose footsteps Cordulus follows.

#### Precise weather

*“It’s a familiar scenario: you mention to a friend that it has rained. He says he didn’t notice, even though you’re not far away from each other. This is because the rainfall was extremely local. For the farmer, whether or not rain has fallen on his field is important. Even small amounts can have major consequences, especially at harvest time,”* says John Smedegaard.

*“We are weather data suppliers. We supply hyperlocal weather data that is validated through our models. But we also supply our customers with a premium hardware product, which are our weather stations. Our customers receive real-time data and access to historical data from all stations. We have built an AI forecast model that takes in data from farmers’ fields. We take in all the open data that our competitors do, but we also have our own station network which can make forecasting much more precise,”* says John Smedegaard.

*“Our stations continually update and bring in new data. In practical terms, this means that the farmer can see when to begin work in his fields, whether the temperature is suitable for sowing, how much rainfall has occurred or if it’s too windy to spray. There are significant savings to be made by timing things correctly. Very precise weather measurements and forecasts play a crucial role in how farmers plan their daily routine.”*

#### Product adaptation

John Smedegaard comes from a farming family and trained as a computer scientist. For him, Cordulus brings together both worlds. The focal point is agriculture, and this is where Cordulus focuses most of its resources. However, the company also offers its weather data product to other industries.

*“When it comes to the weather, our product can be deployed elsewhere. For example, Danish municipalities have established networks and weather stations on roads to provide data on salting requirements,”* says John Smedegaard.

Weather stations are also located in Swedish forests to provide data with a view to preventing forest fires. They have also been used at construction sites to measure wind conditions.

#### Cordulus in the tail wind

Global weather patterns are changing – a fact that is well-known to all. At Cordulus, collecting data on these changes leads to a better product and financial growth for the company.

*“Our algorithm is based on the most diverse weather conditions possible. This makes our weather model in Denmark better. Not having a network of stations present to observe a unique weather event would be detrimental to our model. Ideally, we want to be in many places at the same time. It was extremely cold in Denmark this winter and if we hadn’t had a network out there to observe it, our model would have failed to learn, and we don’t know when a similar event might happen again. Growing our coverage is an important part of our future growth. It is, of course, one thing to grow in terms of revenue, but another to grow in terms of data because that gives a synergistic effect to the entire network.”*

This is why Cordulus is expanding globally. As John Smedegaard says, the weather knows no bounds.

*“It may seem that things have moved quite rapidly, but they have to. We have an aggressive growth target. This is part of our DNA. We want to grow in as many countries as we can. We’re currently setting up a network in the UK and the first distributors are on their way. Last year, it was Northern Germany we needed to cover and now we’re setting the stage in countries like Spain, Hungary and Romania – and the USA is waiting,”* says John Smedegaard.

*“We have to keep pace and even go up a gear, but I don’t think this is a unique approach among companies. We’re putting our foot on the accelerator and doing all that we possibly can.”*

#### Read more about Cordulus here:

Website: [www.cordulus.com](http://www.cordulus.com)  
Instagram: [@cordulus\\_farm](https://www.instagram.com/cordulus_farm)  
LinkedIn: [Cordulus](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cordulus)

# Needles in a HAY STACK

## HAYSTACK:

# Ten years of entrepreneurship at Agro Food Park

Agro Food Park offers a specific environment for entrepreneurs, known as Haystack. It offers business development, mentoring and networking with the aim of growing companies within agriculture, food and associated technologies. It was established in 2013. During that time, companies based there have attracted more than DKK 400 million in investment.

Over the past 10 years, more than 100 companies have been associated with Haystack. They include Agointelli, Cordulus, Planet Dairy, Enorm, Clutch Nutrition, Tracezila and NjordGin, which are now thriving businesses. When the companies are ready to leave Haystack, several will remain at Agro Food Park in their own premises and have access to the network.

Agro Food Park runs Haystack. It is managed on a daily basis by Food & Biocluster.

**Read about Lisbeth Ankersen and Peter Vinther.**

Two stories about entrepreneurship in Haystack on the following pages. >

**Read more about Haystack here:**

[www.agrofoodpark.dk/Haystack/](http://www.agrofoodpark.dk/Haystack/)

LinkedIn: Haystackaarhus



# HAY STACK

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue dress and a dark cardigan, is sitting cross-legged in a field of tall grass. She is smiling and holding a light blue mug with both hands. The background features a utility pole, some trees, and a cloudy sky.

“When working with sensory perception, it’s best to switch off your brain”

Supertaster\* and chemist are both titles that belong to Lisbeth Ankersen. She excels at identifying and describing precise tastes and smells in products for food producers. She is based on the island of Mols, where she likes to spend time when not at Agro Food Park.



## “An objective language for taste makes it easier to understand each other”

Lisbeth Ankersen, Owner of InnovaConsult

Lisbeth Ankersen unfurls a long sheet of paper that rolls down to the floor. Written on it is a list of 400 substances that determine the smell and taste of apples; whether they are sweet, sour, like pineapples, strawberries, or something in between.

“There are seventeen pages here. The list is the key to the taste and smell of apples. An apple can contain 300 flavours and 200 aroma compounds, all of which occur naturally. Apples are the most amazing little chemical factories, but in a harmless and natural way,” explains Lisbeth Ankersen, who heads up InnovaConsult, which helps food producers to describe taste and aromas.

“When I was given the task of describing 124 Danish apple varieties, I started by reading all I could find about them. But I was surprised that their taste was often described in vague language such as ‘it’s a nice apple.’ That’s a subjective assessment and somebody else might think otherwise. More helpful to my work were databases where I could access chemical analyses of apples,” she explains about the background to drawing up a descriptive list prior to publication of her book on the cultivation and taste of old apple varieties.

### Calmness as a tool

Profiling apples was one of the first major projects for her company, which she founded fourteen years ago. Prior to that, Lisbeth Ankersen worked as a product developer, clinical research manager and technical innovation manager. She has an MSc in

Chemistry and Biotechnology. When working with sensory perception, she uses chemistry to identify taste and smell.

“Chemistry is the key to understanding taste and smell. In my work with the 124 apples, I used my sensory perception, but I relied a lot on chemistry to identify individual notes,” she says.

The fact that she is a supertaster makes it easier for her to detect nuances in food and drink. The flavour and smell of apple varieties, she says, differ by the smallest of margins.

“I have a finely tuned sense of taste and smell. Being a supertaster is really about how many taste buds you have on your tongue and whether you’re able to taste certain substances. I’ve been tested in all sorts of ways and always end up as a supertaster,” she says.

The 124-apple variety assignment encapsulates the essence of Lisbeth Ankersen’s work: to taste, smell and describe. But to do this, she needs a calm environment. This she finds in her house on the island of Mols, which has views over the sea and sky. Here, she can focus on her senses and be present in the moment.

“When working with sensory perception, it’s best to switch off your brain. The most important thing is to be calm so I can focus and be present. I have been training for about 30 years and have taken a mindfulness instructor’s course. In the process of tasting and smelling, you need to train your brain to only ask a few simple questions. First, what does it smell like? Sometimes it helps to

close my eyes. Then I taste. Sometimes, it helps to hold my nose if I need to focus on tastes, such as sour, sweet, bitter and umami. The fewer sensory impressions, the better.” Ankersen records her sensory perceptions by hand as it feels like the “shortest path from sensory impression to formulation.”

### 10 years at Agro Food Park

Since she bought her house on Mols, she has downsized her space at Agro Food Park. She used to have her own office, but now she has a desk. She has moved her taste laboratory to her house on Mols, where she works on a daily basis. But she hasn’t left Agro Food Park entirely as she is aware of the benefits of being part of the network. This is also where many of her customers and business partners are located.

“I’ve been at Agro Food Park for ten years. I think I’m the one who has been associated with the incubator (Haystack) the longest. I make use of the network and many of my business partners are here, including Good Sodas, Planet Dairy, the Danish Dairy Board, SEGES and the Danish Agriculture & Food Council. When I’m in Agro Food Park, I appreciate how the distinction between customer and seller blurs during chats next to the coffee machine. That’s what Agro Food Park is all about, and I keep going because it’s a cool place,” she says.

### The bad taste

Whether something tastes good or bad, as Lisbeth Ankersen says, is a subjective assessment. But how do you describe taste? Lisbeth Ankersen has established a language focussed on food and drink through her sensory descriptions.

“We don’t have to agree on whether something tastes good or bad. It’s possible to describe taste objectively. An objective language for taste makes it easier to understand each other. For example, a person selling coffee can say that it tastes nutty, sour, bitter, etc. The customer who knows their own taste preferences can then decide whether to choose the nutty flavour or something different. I try to build a bridge between customer and producer by creating a language so that a product can find its way to the right customer,” she says.

When you’re trained in the majority of tastes and smells, it’s reasonable to assume that you’re not sensitive to any particular food. But that’s not necessarily so. When Lisbeth Ankersen is asked to name a food that she has a strained relationship with, it’s Denmark’s national cheese.

“When I’m not working, I don’t like eating Danbo cheese. But my sensitivity to specific Danbo notes is almost an advantage because I can detect the nuances more easily,” she says, adding that fermented Baltic Sea herring is the most challenging food item she has ever had to taste.

“People have been known to vomit because of it. When I tasted it, it was important to move into that part of the brain where I didn’t focus on whether I liked it or not. It was about what it tastes and smells like. I took a very small bite and focussed... ‘what does it

taste like?’, ‘what does it taste like?’... You can direct your brain.”

Living close to the sea gives her the tranquillity and inspiration she needs in her work. She’s researching her next major project from here.

“I have a front-row seat to climate change – storms, high water levels, etc. I try to incorporate this into my business. I’m currently experimenting with eating all kinds of sea creatures – slipper snails, seaweed fleas, horse prawns and jellyfish. There are so many things we could live on, including arthropods, crustaceans and mussels, which are far more sustainable. I’m experimenting with jellyfish. They’re fascinating! I’m trying to find a way of drying them, so they turn into something that tastes good.”

### \* Sensory perception

“Sensory perception is a scientific method of using one’s senses to assess smell, taste, consistency, mouthfeel and appearance. By designing the test correctly, one can obtain an objective description of the product and how it differs.”

### \*\* Supertaster

“A supertaster, according to most definitions, is having more tastebuds on the tongue than average, or being able to taste certain flavours in a small test kit with taste strips.”

/Lisbeth Ankersen



### Read more about InnovaConsult here:

Website: [www.innovaconsult.dk/](http://www.innovaconsult.dk/)  
LinkedIn: Lisbeth Ankersen



# Good vibe, Good friends, Good Sodas

The brand and its concept were visualised before the first Good Sodas drink was even produced. For Peter Vinther and Rickey Lindberg, who both have commercial backgrounds in the lifestyle industry, the branding element matched their skills and expertise perfectly. For the other element – creating a green alternative to the traditional soft drinks industry – the two founders required a little more help. The company is now on its way to market with more products and dreams of expanding the Good Sodas brand.



*“When we arrived here, we were overwhelmed by all the good ideas about how to improve our drinks.”*

Peter Vinther, Co-founder Good Sodas

good sodas®

**“W**e have basically turned everything on its head. We came with a commercial understanding and a set of skills to define the brand, its direction, and how we could position ourselves. The content came later,” says Peter Vinther, who is the CEO of Good Sodas and one half of the company, which is based in Haystack at Agro Food Park.

The Good Sodas concept came about largely through shared experiences as restaurant customers, where an alternative to conventional soft drinks was non-existent. They have now produced three flavours of a fermented soda with reduced sugar and with no preservatives or phosphoric acid – what Peter Vinther calls “a soda without junk, but with real ingredients.” The product will be available this year.

#### Network

When Peter Vinther and Rickey Lindberg moved to Agro Food Park from Aarhus, they wanted to be in an environment that could support the new direction in which the company was headed. With no prior knowledge of the food industry, they needed a network to help them.

*“We wanted to become part of an ecosystem where people think about sustainability and ecology in a similar way to us, and where we could share knowledge and draw on the expertise of talented people. The challenges that we face in terms of product development, quality assurance and escalation are often the same. When we arrived here, we were overwhelmed by all the good ideas about how to improve our drinks,”* says Peter Vinther and mentions Planet Dairy as one of the companies Good Sodas engaged with, including borrowing their testing facilities.

Good Sodas moved into Haystack in 2022 and has been part of the Agro Food Park environment ever since. Good Sodas has participated in Haystack programmes on crowdfunding, soft funding and sales. *“We needed to find out how to get started, what the re-*

*quirements were in regard to packaging legislation and other legal matters. There have been so many things to deal with,”* says Peter Vinther. Good Sodas has benefitted from Haystack in a number of ways: support in getting off the ground, in the development of soft drinks, as well as advice on collaborations.

*“At Haystack, they’re good at identifying who we should engage with to get things started. They build bridges between companies operating within the drinks sector, some of whom can potentially open doors for us,”* says Peter Vinther.

*“We stand on the shoulders of a lot of people out here who’ve been in business for years. There are also brand-new companies. Haystack provides the opportunity for a chat around the coffee machine or an update over lunch about what other people are doing, why they’re doing it, what their challenges and successes are, and how we can help each other. That’s really what Haystack and Agro Food Park do. When someone like us is new to an industry, being able to draw on knowledgeable people is so valuable.”*

#### The business

The first soda from Good Sodas was Good Cola. According to Peter Vinther, beginning production with a cola drink had both good and bad sides: *“It was confirmed to us that cola is a religion for many people and consumers typically associate cola with Coca Cola. But we aim to give consumers the option of a slightly better-quality product with a different taste profile. We have removed everything synthetic from our sodas and use real ingredients.”*

Unlike other kombucha-based products, Good Sodas are pasteurised. *“Unpasteurised products are fine, but we can’t scale a business if we don’t pasteurise and give our products a little more shelf-life,”* says Peter Vinther, who makes no secret of the fact that Good Sodas is a business dependent on growth. This means that more flavours are in the pipeline.

*“Good Cola is in 70 stores and we expect explosive growth when we offer more flavours and ramp up our marketing,”* he says. Good Sodas is expanding its range with Good Lemon, Good Orange and, later in the year, Good Rhubarb, all packed in clean, simple packaging and colours, with minimalist black line drawings.

#### The dream

Managing a start-up company is challenging. Navigating the difficulties while remaining positive takes a special kind of person:

*“During the establishment phase, there are many tasks and loose ends. You’re therefore dependent on a good ecosystem: good partnerships, good colleagues, and good advisers who help to ensure that everything hangs together. My learning curve has been steep, and I dream of soon being able to delegate tasks as we build a sustainable organisation. Our goal is to introduce consumers to sodas of the future, but we also want to provide a cool workplace with a fantastic team of inspiring colleagues,”* says Peter Vinther. *“You could say that our dream is to see our company take flight. It’s one thing to think that you have the world’s coolest project, another is to see new employees, customers and consumers light up when they taste our drinks and buy into our brand. It’s an enormous motivation.”*

As Good Sodas turbocharges its business, new dreams are unfolding, some of which can be traced back to the partners’ pre-Good Sodas’ history. Good Sodas aims to be a lifestyle brand, involving other product lines and collaborations with other companies.

*“It must be about more than a soft drink. We want to make the Good Sodas brand more visible, which is why we’ve produced t-shirts and caps that can be purchased from our webshop,”* says Peter Vinther, who is wearing a cap that carries the inscription, ‘Good Friend’. *“But it’s also important to remain focused on the essentials, like purchasing, production, sales, finance and so on.”*

Peter Vinther believes that Agro Food Park is the right location for their company. *“The network that comes with being part of Agro Food Park has been important in the establishment of Good Sodas. And I expect to benefit from the entire ecosystem out here as we scale the company.”*

#### Read more about Good Sodas:

Website: [www.good-sodas.com](http://www.good-sodas.com)

Instagram: @goodsodas





Robot technology is revolutionising agriculture. Agrobot, a longstanding frontrunner in robotics, has always tried to integrate sustainability into its business. The industry is developing quickly, yet challenges remain.

## “We’re on a journey that takes time”

In summer 2015, Ole Green set out his vision for the company of which he is now CEO. His plan was to make agriculture more profitable and sustainable, an idea that gained traction after the UN’s sustainable development goals were adopted in Paris.

*“I haven’t changed my vision for the company since Paris. But I’ve often had to explain the role of sustainable agriculture in our vision and why, as a commercial company, we are preoccupied with sustainability. It was seen as rather strange at the time, but we were simply ahead of the game,”* says Ole Green with a smile.

### **Sustainable driving force**

Although there was a lot of explaining to do at the beginning, the idea of automating field operations was a strong one and the basis on which Agrobot was founded. From eight employees based at Agro Food Park, the company has grown to a team of 25 across Denmark and abroad.

*“How can we use less energy? How can we improve the working environment, traceability and documentation, and how can we create more transparency?”* According to Ole Green, *“We can do so by getting down to square metre level and seeing how much the farmer has worked the land, cultivated it, and how many nutrients have been applied.”* This is the basis for creating profitable and sustainable farming.

*“That’s the driving force for me. I’m a farmer by training, born and raised on a farm in West Jutland, but I was determined not to pursue the same path. In my view, managing the land using tradi-*

*tional methods is not sustainable and I still think so today. To me, it’s common sense that healthy soil isn’t compacted, has a high content of organic matter, is well nourished and has great biodiversity. Healthy soil can support production that is less sensitive to climate change, produce healthy food, and run a more robust farming operation. Agrobot’s ROBOTTI is a tool that can make a real difference in this regard.”*

### **ROBOTTI: a solution-oriented winner**

At one time, man used his physical strength to till the soil. Then, animals were used to plough the fields. At the dawn of the 20th century, the motorised tractor with a driver behind the wheel revolutionised farming. That was some time ago and technology has advanced somewhat since then.

Robot technology, which is now used in vacuum cleaners, drones and cars, is a reality. ROBOTTI is bringing the future of robot technology into the fields.

*“For 10,000 years, we depended on animals and tools and then, suddenly, farmers were no longer reliant on the horse. What it actually comes down to is how we move a harrow or a seed drill. Our basic idea when we designed the robot was to look at how we could get the tool to move itself. In other words, with the tool at the centre and not as a pulling function. A tractor is designed to pull, but there are so many mechanical things that make it unsuitable,”* explains Ole Green about the ROBOTTI concept.

*“By not having a driver, there’s no need for a cab offering amenities >*

*“ When I travel around and meet representatives from various food clusters, I think this is a unique place we have here.”*

Ole Green, CEO Agrobot

*such as air-conditioning and a refrigerator, which are part of the modern tractor today. Around 30% of tractor production costs relate to driving comfort. We can build a cheaper field machine by focusing on the needs of the job, not the driver.*

In many ways, ROBOTTI is the essence of Agrobot. This is what gets people talking and what wins prizes.

*“It’s beautifully futuristic, and it’s easy to see what the robot is doing. But Agrobot is actually much more the digital infrastructure involved in automating a task in the field, such as planning, execution, safety, monitoring, documentation and traceability. It’s about what goes on in the field that we are concerned with – from the planning phase to the documented process. Two-thirds of what we give our customer is the software system that supplies data,”* says Ole Green.

At the 2024 World Exhibition of Agricultural Robots in Toulouse, France, Agrobot won a gold medal for the most solution-oriented robot among 32 exhibiting companies and 18 nominated robots.

*“It’s a major exhibition of highly commercial solutions. Farmers, journalists and dealers gather here solely to look at agricultural robots. Voting took place among the 3,500 visitors so this was great recognition for us,”* says Ole Green, who adds that they are not the only players in the market. Agrobot has transitioned from what Ole Green describes as an “engineering-heavy company” to one that focuses more on production and commercialisation. Everything is based on sustainability, a word that he uses often and one that, he believes, determines the company’s relevance today.

#### **The Agro Food Park panorama**

Agrobot scouts the world to find the right skills. It is an international company with fourteen nationalities and offices in Denmark and elsewhere. Its headquarters is at Agro Food Park with 15 employees who are mainly engaged in development and support. Production, purchasing and planning are based in Ringkøbing on the west coast of Jutland, while commercialisation of the business takes place in Spain, Germany and Poland.

When the company was created nine years ago, Agrobot moved into Agro Food Park’s start-up environment, where they spent the next two years. Agrobot now occupies a large office complex within walking distance of the wider Agro Food Park network, which has global reach.

*“Agro Food Park has a wide focus, which for me and our owners is critical. The Danish food cluster is rooted in Agro Food Park. When delegations visit Denmark, they often pay us a*



*visit, which gives us international exposure. It can be difficult, for example, to explain to an ambassador or a Middle Eastern delegation what we do. But here, we can show them our fields – right next to our office – and see the robot in action,”* says Ole Green. *“When we hold our international dealer seminars here in Aarhus, and delegates look around and see Arla and Aarhus University, it gives branding value: ‘You’re based in the right place,’ they say. How often I’ve received that comment...”*

Having a network close at hand was key to Agrobot selecting Agro Food Park as a base. *“We have colleagues from Aarhus University just on the other side of the road as well as the Innovation Centre for Ecology and HortiAdvice. It’s a great environment. There’s life, a professional atmosphere and there are always people about. You can sit in the coffee area for a discussion and meet people with similar interests. When I travel around and meet representatives from various food clusters, I think this is a unique place we have here,”* says Ole Green.

#### **A challenging journey**

Agrobot has embarked on a journey. Although the time is right to make sustainability a focal point for business, wars, the Covid-pandemic, energy and food crises have presented new challenges.

*“Today, we live in a world that is facing many more challenges. People think differently and have taken a step down in their hierarchy of needs. Regulations on pesticide use have been relaxed because environmental concerns shouldn’t come at the cost of food production in Europe. And, of course, when reductions in the use of chemicals and energy are seen as less important, this doesn’t benefit our case,”* says Ole Green. *“When we present a business case to a farmer, we show that we can actually deliver a financially competitive product. But it requires a shift in mindset to go from farming with tractors to using robots. Certain societal challenges mean that this is not a rapid transition. It will take time, but I believe that what we’re doing is the right way to go.”*

**AGROINTELLI**

**Read more about Agrobot:**

Website: [www.agrobot.com](http://www.agrobot.com)

Instagram: @Agrobot

LinkedIn: @Agrobot





Johanne Birn, Space Manager. (Left)  
Emilie Mariegaard, Talent Relations Specialist at Nature Energy. (Right.)

# Career Space connects companies with talent

13 Agro Food Park houses 'CareerSpace': a unique and attractive study environment that aims to connect students and recent graduates with companies in the agriculture and food sector.

It's morning at Career Space. A small group is gathered around the table: students, graduates and two employees from Nature Energy. The event, known as 'Brainy Breakfast', allows companies to introduce themselves to students in an informal setting. Today, Emilie Mariegaard from Nature Energy is hosting the event and, over coffee and bread rolls, she briefs the group on what skills the company requires. The students, in turn, explain their backgrounds and their experiences in job hunting.

"This is where we get a completely different time with the students. We get the chance to explain various things about the company and questions are asked in a different way," says Emilie Mariegaard, Talent Relations Specialist at Nature Energy. "The sessions are more productive when there aren't so many people, and the atmosphere isn't so formal."

One of those present is Cath Thulesen Dahl. A recent graduate from AU Food Department, she is a regular at the Career Space events. "Career Space has been extremely beneficial to me. The events highlight how important it is to be part of a community that promotes learning and growth." Career Space, which is also a location for students and graduates to share ideas on job applications and career plans, is managed by Johanne Birn.

### Career Space gives access to skills

Nature Energy moved into Agro Food Park in 2023 and has had a partnership with Career Space ever since.

"When we moved into Agro Food Park, one of the first things we did was to join Career Space. We were new here, so it was a way of settling in. We're delighted to be part of Agro Food Park, to be close to other companies and to get to know the students. The latter is something that we've put greater focus on and something I'm engaged with on a daily basis," says Emilie Mariegaard.

Proximity to students offers companies at Agro Food Park easy access to skills. Similarly, the students get the opportunity to learn more about companies that may employ them in the future.

"Students want insight into which companies exist, what job opportunities are available to them, and which profiles and skills companies are recruiting. For companies, it makes sense to identify the people, skills, and expertise that might be needed in the future. Companies may also become aware of certain fields of study that were previously unknown to them, but which could be just as interesting as those they traditionally recruit from," says Johanne Birn. This is important for a company like Nature Energy.

"Career Space allows us to be challenged in our conversations with students. As we meet students with different backgrounds and skill sets, it's a two-way process that we can learn from. As a company, we're very open to meeting future candidates, which has suddenly become easy with Career Space," says Emilie Mariegaard. >

### Potential for more

So far, Career Space has focussed on students with a background in agriculture and food studies, but Johanne Birn sees a need to broaden the concept:

*“Since 2022, our focus has been on graduates in food and agriculture, but there is also a need to recruit software developers, business developers, marketing employees and other skills that are needed in the industry. I can clearly see some development perspectives in highlighting opportunities in study areas that extend beyond the food industry. Some companies are already calling for this.”*

As well as informal morning meetings with companies, Career Space also runs theme meetings, workshops and presentations. Partners have an input on what events are held. Companies can choose between three partnerships. Nature Energy is a gold partner and is therefore on the Career Space Advisory Board.

*“The more you contribute as a partner, the more you get out of it. Our ideas are heard and acted upon. We discussed, for example, organising a CV workshop, and two weeks later, we had organised a meeting. It’s super cool,”* says Emilie Mariegaard, who also praises Agro Food Park’s Career Day, an annual event that Career Space co-sponsors.

### Career Day at Agro Food Park

Career Day attracts students, educational institutions and companies in the field of agriculture and food. For one day in September, the event connects companies based at Agro Food Park with students and job seekers.

*“We attended Career Day in September 2023 and noticed real commitment and proactivity among the students. When job fairs are moved away from educational institutions, students attend out of interest, not because they are on the timetable,”* says Emilie Mariegaard.

*“We spoke to many candidates and also received a number of enquiries. It was a great day to be at a company,”* says Emilie Mariegaard, who adds that potential applicants can also book a coffee meeting with Nature Energy through its website, and many have already done so.

*“We have a responsibility to show students what lies on the other side and give them an understanding of what they’re getting involved in, what daily working life is like and what their skills can be used for,”* says Emilie Mariegaard. *“The concept of Career Space is good. We don’t have to go out and find the students, they’re here. It’s about what we can offer them. It makes sense for us and the students.”*

For former student Cath Thulesen Dahl, the meeting at Career Space was decisive: *“Events at Agro Food Park have been critical to developing my career. My path from an MSc student to Social Media Manager at the N2Crop project, to administrative assistant at the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics at Aarhus University, is proof of the power of networking, keeping informed and taking advantage of opportunities.”*



# CAREER SPACE

## Facts

- Career Space has existed since September 2022
- Career Space was established to link students with an interest in agriculture and food with companies in the industry.
- Career Space facilitates events for companies and students in collaboration with companies.
- Career Space offers three types of partnership for companies inside and outside Agro Food Park.
- Career Space manager is Johanne Birn, who can be contacted at [jobi@agrofoodpark.dk](mailto:jobi@agrofoodpark.dk).

### Read more about Career Space here:

Webside: [www.agrofoodpark.dk/career-space/](http://www.agrofoodpark.dk/career-space/)  
LinkedIn: Career Space Agro Food Park



*Audu derives from Audhumbla, the primeval cow which, in Norse mythology, gives milk to the first being in Norse mythology and the ancestor of all giants, Ymir.*

/Wikipedia

< Paul Cornillon, one of the three founders of PlanetDairy, and Amalie Thomasen, product Developer at PlanetDairy



## Less dairy, more plant-based: “Audu is like a hybrid car”

**P**lanetDairy is an innovative dairy company that makes environmentally friendly products under the name of Audu. As a start-up, it has grown quickly in recent years thanks to the green transition.

*“We are Audu and we love dairy products.”* These words are taken from the ‘About Audu’ section on the company website. The three founders of PlanetDairy, Paul Cornillon, Jesper Colding and Jacob Skovgaard, like butter, cheese and cream – as do the majority of the population. This, in itself, would not be a notable fact if it were not for the company’s efforts to change consumer tastes from conventional dairy products to an environmentally friendly alternative.

### Transparency

Although the three men explicitly state their love of dairy products, the website also notes their desire “to break with the way conventional dairy products impact the climate with intensive water consumption and high CO2 emissions.”

PlanetDairy is on a mission to reduce CO2 emissions from dairy products. This will be challenging, as it involves changing the shopping habits of Danish people and encouraging them to choose greener alternatives. The company aims to change the minds of consumers in part through transparency in the company objectives and how it intends to deliver them.

*“We are extremely transparent in everything we do, especially with consumers,”* says Paul Cornillon. *“A QR code on the product enables them to see how and how much we reduce CO2 because we need to be able to explain how we calculate a CO2 reduction. We’re also transparent about the ingredients we use and where they come from because we want to do things correctly – greenwashing is not an option.”*

### Part of the green transition

The three founders met around ten years ago while employees at Arla. Jacob Skovgaard, who is now Managing Director of PlanetDairy, and Jesper Colding, responsible for sales and marketing,

worked in Arla’s commercial arm. Paul Cornillon was Arla’s head of innovation and is now responsible for product development. They joined forces in 2022 and created PlanetDairy to further the green transition in the dairy industry.

*“There are currently many initiatives to make the dairy industry more sustainable, but they will take a long time. We were just impatient and couldn’t wait any longer. We asked each other what we could do to start driving change now,”* says Paul Cornillon. PlanetDairy is focussing squarely on the dairy category, which Cornillon says emits the most CO2.

*“Cheese emits the most CO2 of any dairy category. Milk emits around 1.5 kg CO2 per kg. On average, it takes 10 litres of milk to make one kg of cheese. Some cheeses have particularly high emissions, such as feta, which yields around 30 kg CO2 per kg. When there are no alternatives, people continue to consume these products, even if they would really like to change that,”* says Paul Cornillon, who points to cows as the main problem in the dairy industry.

*“Cutting reliance on cows for dairy products would reduce the CO2 footprint of the entire industry. This is why there are a lot of investment and initiatives across the world to create milk ingredients using biotechnology that do not contain cow’s milk but replicate its properties.”* Cornillon adds that the ingredients in cow’s milk alternatives can already be found in markets outside the EU, such as in the U.S. and Singapore. >



# planet dairy

*So, when we couldn't use these ingredients what could we do? We had to research other ingredients to see if we could combine the best of dairy with the best of plants. That's what we're doing now." Cornillon describes PlanetDairy's products as a mix of dairy cheese and protein from legumes and vegetable oils.*

#### **Like a hybrid car**

*"We've made a grated and a sliced cheese and managed to achieve a 40 per cent CO2 reduction compared to traditional grated mozzarella or soft cheese. We're in the process of launching a soft sliced cheese with a 50-60 per cent reduction in 2024. We're also working on the 'fresh dairy products' category and expect to launch products in the Danish market in Q1 2025. We are currently committed to products with at least a 30-40 per cent reduction, and as we gain more knowledge and technological ability, this will rise to 70 per cent. We believe that we can achieve 90-95 per cent reduction when the ingredients I previously mentioned become available in the EU. We're waiting for them to be approved. In fact, the whole industry is waiting," says Cornillon.*

Another challenge is how Audu products should be marketed. Audu is not produced like a traditional cheese, which means that PlanetDairy cannot use the word 'cheese' to describe their products. This makes it harder to communicate with consumers.

*"Talking to you, I call it cheese because it's the word I know you know and can relate to. If I said it was a half-mozzarella and a half plant-based product, the discussion would naturally develop into what the product looks and tastes like. The consumer calls it cheese, but from a professional perspective, it's not cheese. There is a communication challenge – I grant you that," says Paul Cornillon.*

*"We call our products hybrids – a bit like cars. There are petrol cars, there are electric cars, and then there are hybrid cars. Similarly, there are dairy products that are plant-based and then there's us in the middle. We believe that hybrid dairy products will grow as a category, become a mainstay on supermarket shelves, and form part of a more climate-friendly diet for consumers."*

#### **Still a start-up**

Audu is now available in almost all supermarkets and some canteens. PlanetDairy has grown out of the startup environment at Agro Food Park (where it all began in April 2022) and now operates with eight

employees out of its own premises at Agro Food Park. The company's rise has been rapid. Nevertheless, Cornillon still regards PlanetDairy as a startup.

*"As long as we're not in a comfortable place in regard to funding and sales, we are still a startup. We need to grow further and we need to secure more funding. When you have three to five years of guaranteed funding behind you, I think you stop being a startup." While Cornillon is optimistic, he knows that the coming years will be busy from an innovation, commercial and sales perspective.*

*"We need to keep launching new products so customers continue to believe in us. This is a positive pressure, but still a pressure, as we have to consider our financial position, as well. That's how it is for all startups. At the end of the day, you can have a really good idea and good technology, but if you don't have the money to bring a product to market, things won't work out."*

For this reason, Cornillon stresses the importance to PlanetDairy of being part of an innovative entrepreneurial environment at Haystack. *"The Food & Bio Cluster assists start-up companies like ours. They have helped us with funding, initiatives, finding ingredients and partners, and given us access to an innovative ecosystem. That's why we decided to base the company at Agro Food Park. It was an obvious choice for us."*

PlanetDairy has the backing of investors and is preparing to launch in Sweden, Holland, Germany and Finland. The future looks bright, but success is not guaranteed:

*"We are fortunate to have investors who support us and believe in what we do. Of course, they challenge us on our commercial results, sales and our operations and it's only fair that they do. We're in a good place, but we must remember the pressure because if we forget it, we're doomed."*

#### **Read more about Audu here:**

Websites: [www.audu.dk](http://www.audu.dk) - [www.planetdairy.com](http://www.planetdairy.com)  
Instagram: [@audu\\_dk](https://www.instagram.com/audu_dk)

# Agro Food Park is Expanding



When Agro Food Park opened its doors in 2009, it focussed exclusively on the agricultural and food industry. More companies have joined since then, bringing more innovation across the industry, which is increasingly encompassing new sectors, such as health, technology and green energy. The core of Agro Food Park is expanding as the world calls for more sustainable solutions. This requires an even greater focus on collaboration between key industries to drive the green transition. Agro Food Park is therefore poised to expand its industry specialisation to include health and green energy, thus becoming an area that provides solutions to global challenges and sustainable development.

“ **A**griculture and the food industry play a role in relation to a number of the major global challenges, i.e. hunger, health, energy and land use. In this way, some of the major agendas are interdependent. At Agro Food Park, we want to reach out to even more of the sectors that are making an impact on the global agenda to help bring about solutions that contribute to sustainability and improved health,” says Anne-Marie Hansen, Director of Agro Food Park.

These are ambitions shared by Aarhus Municipality, as is evident from its climate strategy for 2025–2030, ‘Climate Neutral 2030’. In it, Agro Food Park plays a part in the municipality’s ambitions to be CO2 neutral by 2030, as projections show that the municipality’s climate action is progressing too slowly.

Agro Food Park and the area around it should serve as part of the solution, in line with Agro Food Park’s ambitions to contribute even more towards creating sustainable solutions. The partners in the climate strategy agree that Agro Food Park should expand to encompass companies operating within the areas of health and green energy, and integrate relevant areas connected to the agriculture and food industry at Agro Food Park.

It is also part of the expansion plan to investigate whether part of the 100-hectare area around Agro Food Park could be used for renewable energy production, thereby contributing to Aarhus Municipality’s climate goals.

“The wish to expand our industry specialisation has evolved alongside Aarhus Municipality and has now become part of their climate strategy. After all, we have always had a strong relationship with them and the establishment of Agro Food Park has, from the outset, been defined by industry specialisation – which is unique. There has always been a link between the political desire to support innovation in the agriculture and food industry and what we have practically been allowed to do, and our ambitions for the type of environment and innovation we want to create,” says Anne-Marie Hansen about the interaction between Aarhus Municipality and Agro Food Park.

#### The food system of the future at Agro Food Park

In the climate strategy 2025–2030, Agro Food Park is highlighted as a guide to the future food system. The agreement points out how Danish agriculture and the food industry play a significant role in achieving carbon neutrality, and Aarhus Municipality therefore wants to create partnerships with the food industry to be able to make progress in this area. Agro Food Park is, as mentioned, a relevant partnership that can “...attract companies and institutions that create sustainable solutions – both for the Danish and global industry,” as the climate strategy sets out. Anne-Marie Hansen sees Agro Food Park’s role as a facilitator and the gateway for companies:

“Agro Food Park should be the door opener – or bridge builder – for the right companies that are in and around Agro Food Park. We can facilitate collaboration and knowledge about the solutions that are already being worked on. And whether the solutions generated here create resource-efficient utilisation in Denmark, Kenya or Thailand is almost irrelevant. The most important thing is that it makes a difference. We want to reach far beyond Denmark’s borders, there is no doubt about that,” she says.

For Rolf Johnsen, Head of Climate and Energy at Aarhus Municipality, these views dovetail well with the approach contained in the agreement on the 2025–2030 climate strategy. It states that “Denmark has an ambition to be a leading green country. Aarhus Municipality’s climate action plays a key part in this. We are a small, big city, but by showing the way to a CO2-neutral future, we can inspire and show other cities the way to a sustainable future”.

#### Expanded sector specialisation brings knowledge and innovation together

By bringing together knowledge from the agriculture and food industry, the health sector and the energy sector, there is a basis for even more innovation and cross-industry solu-



tions, which have multiple points of connection and can support each other in delivering sustainable solutions.

“As the entire Danish agricultural and food industry has an ambition to become carbon neutral, the industry has expanded. It has become even clearer how, for example, the energy sector and agriculture are linked. When we look out of the window towards Skejby and Aarhus University Hospital, we are aware of a health agenda that is connected to what we eat. First, these are two areas that are key on the global agenda, second, both have a strong connection with food, and third, it is something we excel at in Aarhus. In fact, Skejby has much to offer, with the health cluster concentrated around Aarhus University Hospital, and a business area with some skilled companies operating across the entire green energy agenda. There are clear synergies between these areas,” concludes Anne-Marie Hansen, explaining why it makes good sense to gather the various sectors at Agro Food Park.

“Today, Agro Food Park is a close-knit family around a fairly limited number of sectors. In future, there will be greater diversity. This does not necessarily mean that we will always understand what those on the other side of the lunch table are engaged in, but I believe that there will be a number of ways where we’ll be able to draw on each other. In other words, it will be interesting to see, for instance, how the innovation cluster differs across the various sectors, the way in which innovation takes place, how a business develops, etc. We can learn from each other,” she says.

Aarhus Municipality supports these ambitions in the climate strategy. They want to promote what they have tentatively called

the Climate, Health and Foodsystems Valley on the Agro Food Park’s estate. This will maintain the Aarhus region as a world leader in the field. And even if the name still needs to be worked on, the meaning is correct, says Anne-Marie Hansen, adding that this naturally means that Agro Food Park has to rethink its vision and strategy:

“We haven’t provided an environment for so many in the past, so it requires us to rethink the ecosystem and, externally it should also signal more than just Agro Food Park,” she says. “This is a process that needs to be respected. We have to find the right and meaningful way to do it,” she says of the work that is underway that will, before long, evolve from ideas into new buildings, more knowledge and more innovation at Agro Food Park.

**AGRO  
FOOD  
PARK**

#### Read more about Agro Food Park:

Website: [www.agrofoodpark.dk](http://www.agrofoodpark.dk)  
LinkedIn: [Agrofoodpark](https://www.linkedin.com/company/agrofoodpark)



## THE AGRO FOOD PARK

# TEAM

The Agro Food Park team is responsible for servicing buildings - internally and externally, creating networking events, communicating internally and externally and bringing new companies into Agro Food Park.



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# AGRO FOOD PARK

### Read more about

Read about Agro Food Park's offices, events, Haystack, Career Space and other information at our website [agrofoodpark.dk](https://agrofoodpark.dk)