

## Ten questions for Agrilution CEO and Founder Max Loessl

### Vertical Farming – system limits of the planet – climate neutrality and greenwashing

***To what extent can Vertical Farming help to feed a world population that will soon number eight billion people?***

Vertical Farming alone will certainly not solve the problem, just as organic farming alone will not solve it, rather it always requires a combination of different approaches. In my opinion, the best route would be to combine regenerative agriculture, regenerative forestry, regenerative aquaculture and Vertical Farming. This would allow us to produce sustainably and have everything covered: on all the plates of all the people on earth.

***Where do you see the greatest benefits of Vertical Farming?***

Vertical Farming makes the most sense for products that have a high water content and normally have to travel long distances from A to B in a closed cold chain. This means Salads, Herbs, certain types of vegetables, berries or even fresh Microgreens and plants, which are used to make healthy teas and infused water.

***Can the population be substantially fed with the help of Vertical Farming?***

Of course potatoes or rice can also be grown in a Vertical Farm but it doesn't currently make sense, either from an economical point of view or in terms of energy. But if we humans were to completely destroy the soil and it were a matter of survival, we could also grow our staple foods vertically. Fortunately we are not at this stage yet, although we are also not that far from it.

***How far away are we?***

We have a window of just under ten years to devote to the Planetary Boundaries, that is the system limits of the planet. If we don't take advantage of this window of opportunity, the problem will no longer be that it's too sunny, or too warm, or too cold – we will no longer be able to grow enough food for the people on the planet because we have too little healthy soil. And yet the topic of soil still gets far too little attention in the climate debate – intact, healthy soils bind CO<sub>2</sub>, whereas depleted agricultural land is a massive producer of CO<sub>2</sub>.

***Is that where you come in with Agrilution?***

I think that's our biggest leverage: Vertical Farming doesn't have a negative impact on the soil or the biodiversity in the environment. We can, as a first step, look to do less harm by growing food

without the need for soil and pesticides. And, as the next step, we want to do our part to help nature actively regenerate and rebuild soils. Through cooperation and our own initiatives.

### ***What do you see as your biggest mission?***

We want to help contribute to healthy nutrition in society, but also foster an awareness of the environment and nature by raising awareness at different levels. Our aim is to bring as many Plantcubes or Personal Vertical Farms as possible as close as possible to the consumer, especially in urban areas where green spaces, gardens or balconies for home growing are scarce.

### ***Are you planning larger farms as well?***

Not at this time, we are continuing to focus on the smallest units. Our Plantcubes are in private homes as well as in the kitchens of some well-known chefs, and that's where we continue to see ourselves. And with every Plantcube that's out there, we're expanding our knowledge of plants grown under controlled conditions, which are up to 30 times richer in healthy nutrients. And we can then use this data again to make cultivation even more efficient.

### ***How sustainable is Agrilution?***

Sustainable thinking and action is the basis of our corporate culture. People and nature are the focus of all activities. We are constantly working to make materials and processes sustainable and to continuously improve ourselves wherever possible. Our appliances, for example, are designed in such a way that they can be dismantled into their individual parts and thus also repaired at our premises. And most recently, we have been offering interested customers special terms with a green electricity supplier. Sustainability is definitely not just a buzzword for us, but a topic that we understand as a process in which we are constantly learning and improving.

### ***What about climate neutrality?***

The term on everyone's lips. We analyse the life cycle of our products in detail – from raw materials, production and logistics, to use. We reduce emissions and offset those that are currently unavoidable through projects. This means that we work out to be CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral, but this will not stop us striving for more. And we are not satisfied with just this. In our opinion, to focus on climate neutrality alone is the wrong incentive on the part of politicians, we have to act holistically and look at all system boundaries because we live on a planet with limited resources. As long as industry can buy its way out and advertise that it is "climate neutral" instead of reducing CO<sub>2</sub>, nothing will change.

## ***Are you talking about greenwashing?***

CO<sub>2</sub> certificates allow the urgently needed reduction to be postponed again and again, and this is a huge problem. We can't just pass this on to consumers alone. The greatest leverage lies with industry, which is not yet properly incentivised by the politicians.

We hope that through our transparency we can encourage other companies to become more transparent and communicate more honestly. And we are also working on the next steps. We want our positive impact to be measurable, and for others to be able to measure us as well. For us, climate neutral means taking responsibility for what we cannot avoid today. However, the goal is and remains the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>. Only then can we achieve the internationally defined Sustainable Development Goals within Planetary Boundaries.

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