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Source.ag acquires optimal to scale AI-driven greenhouse production

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The deal combines Source.agâ??s crop monitoring and harvest forecasting software with Optimalâ??s AI-driven climate control technology, with first deployments planned at customer greenhouses in Europe and North America this winter

Source.ag, the Amsterdam-based artificial intelligence company serving greenhouse growers, has acquired London-based startup Optimal, bringing autonomous greenhouse control technology into its existing crop intelligence platform.

The acquisition combines Source.ag's software for crop monitoring, harvest forecasting and irrigation automation with Optimal's AI system for controlling the greenhouse environment. Financial terms were not disclosed. Optimal founder and CEO Dave Hunter will join Source.ag as vice-president of autonomous control, alongside the startup's engineering team.

The deal comes as greenhouse operators face mounting pressure from extreme weather, water scarcity, volatile energy prices and shortages of skilled growers. Controlled-environment agriculture can help maintain vegetable production when outdoor cultivation becomes less reliable, but expanding greenhouse capacity requires technology that can manage increasingly complex operations without depending entirely on scarce specialist expertise.

Optimal's software directly controls heating, ventilation, screens, lighting, carbon dioxide levels and irrigation through growers' existing hardware. Its system combines physics-based modelling with machine learning to plan growing conditions several days ahead and adjust them in real time as weather conditions change.

In a commercial-scale greenhouse in the Netherlands, Optimal reported a 13 per cent increase in yield and 27 per cent lower energy use compared with a benchmark Dutch grower. The company has also operated commercial systems in the Netherlands and Canada.

From crop intelligence to autonomous control

Source.ag’s existing platform monitors crops, forecasts harvests weeks in advance and automates irrigation. Optimal adds control over the wider greenhouse climate, bringing crop-level predictions and environmental management into a connected system.

The combined platform is designed to observe crop conditions, anticipate production outcomes and adjust the growing environment accordingly. Rather than simply providing recommendations to growers, the technology aims to automate more of the decisions required to maintain stable conditions and optimise production.

Source.ag says its software is already deployed across more than 500 greenhouses in 25 countries. The platform supports tomato, pepper and cucumber production valued at €2.5 billion annually and works with 13 of the world’s 25 largest high-tech greenhouse growers.

The company has raised €50 million from investors including Astanor Ventures, Acre Venture Partners, Enza Zaden and Harvest House.

Rien Kamman, co-founder and CEO of Source.ag, said the acquisition would help move the company towards a more comprehensive form of AI-driven greenhouse management.

“Everyone is talking about physical AI. With this deal we are putting our money where our mouth is,” Kamman said.

He added that Optimal’s technology had already demonstrated yield and energy improvements in commercial greenhouses. Integrating it into Source.ag’s established platform could accelerate deployment and help address the shortage of expert growers needed to operate additional facilities.

Addressing the greenhouse labour and energy challenge

Optimal was founded in 2016 by Hunter, a former head of quantitative trading at Deutsche Bank who also participated in Oxford’s Machine Learning group. The company was built around the premise that AI systems capable of managing complex physical environments could also control greenhouse operations.

Its team includes people with backgrounds at Oxford, Imperial College, Airbus and Red Bull Racing. Investors include Founders Fund, Backed VC, 2050 and Acequia Capital, alongside angel investors Charlie Songhurst, Ed Grefenstette and Wendy Tan White.

Hunter said the shortage of skilled growers was restricting greenhouse expansion and leaving food production exposed to climate and energy disruptions.

By joining Source.ag, Optimal aims to accelerate the deployment of autonomous control systems across a larger international customer base. The combined platform is intended to help growers increase productivity while managing energy use and operational complexity.

Kees van Veen, CEO of Agro Care, one of Europe’s largest greenhouse tomato producers and a Source.ag customer, said growers needed practical technology that could maintain stable growing conditions, control energy consumption and preserve product quality at scale.

He described autonomous control as a logical next step for greenhouse production and said Agro Care intended to be among the first users.

Commercial deployments planned for this winter

Source.ag plans to launch the first autonomous deployments at customer greenhouses in Europe and North America during winter 2026–27. The company intends to extend its AI suite to additional crops, cultivation methods and geographical markets over time.

The longer-term ambition is to make greenhouse production easier to deploy and operate across a wider range of regions, supporting year-round access to fresh produce despite increasingly volatile weather and energy conditions.

The acquisition marks a shift in greenhouse AI from systems that primarily analyse crops and support decisions towards platforms designed to act directly on the growing environment. Its commercial significance will depend on how consistently autonomous control can improve yields, energy efficiency and operating performance across different greenhouse configurations and production conditions.