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## Project Newsletter #19

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**Interview with Arnaud de la Fouchardière**



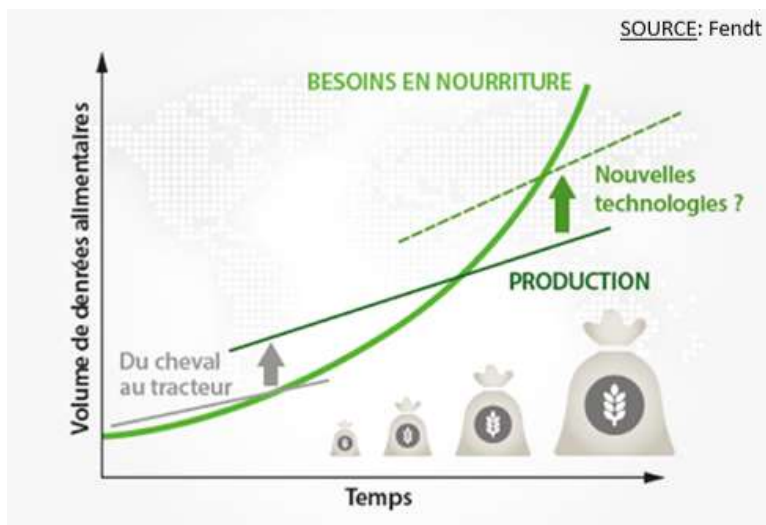
# Arnaud de la Fouchardière



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## What is briefly the history of Vitirover?

The story of Vitirover can be summed up in the idea of a winegrower who finds that it is impossible in this age of technology to continue to maintain the soil of the vine after the ban on chemical weedkillers, with large very expensive machines (tractors and plows), which do not respect the soil, which injure and cut vines causing crop losses, which compact the soil, which creates gullying and which are very difficult to recycle.



## What are the competitive advantages and market positioning of Vitirover in the agricultural robots' market?

The competitive advantages and market positioning of Vitirover can be summed up in the demand of our winegrower customers, to come out conventional approaches thanks to technologies:

- Grass is not an enemy to be eliminated (with glyphosate or plowing), but an ally to be maintained.
- The work does not necessarily have to be done at precise and successive periods; it can be done permanently (permanent maintenance of the grass cover).
- The soils return to beautiful grassy areas maintained with earthworms in the soil and insects above the soil.
- Maintaining permanent grass, creates carbon sinks and fixes carbon instead of returning it to the atmosphere with plowing).

It is the possibility for the winegrowers to add an income (Carbon Offsetting Credits) without correlation with the weather, the vine diseases or the price of the grape.

- The tools are not necessarily sold; we can offer a service to customers (Vitirover as a Service that we have been offering for 4 years).
- Large and very large autonomous machines present a lethal risk, which makes it difficult to obtain authorizations for autonomous operation, they can be replaced by fleets of very small machines.
- These fleets of very small machines: Have the authorization to operate in complete autonomy, because they do not carry any lethal risk; Do not compact the soil, do not create gullying; Do not present any risk of injuring or cutting a vine; Consume less energy; Are easy to eco-design (circular economy) and lastly, they are easier to recycle.

<b>Autonomous tractors: automate existing processes</b>	<b>VITIROVER: transforms existing processes</b>
<i>Incremental evolution</i>	<i>Radical evolution</i>
Big machine	Fleet of small machine
Grass is an enemy to be eliminated	Grass is an ally to protect
Packs soils, contributes to gullying	20 kg, no compaction / gullying
There is a timing to do the work	Permanent work
Classic plowing	Permanent grass maintenance
Machine sale	Sale of a service
Bare soil objective (chemistry or plowing)	Maintenance objective : "meadows"
Carbon emission	Carbon fixation
Lethal risk for humans and animals	Zero lethal risk
Hurt and cut wine stocks	Never an injured or cut vine stock
No authorization for real autonomy	Real autonomy authorized by law



## Do you see a bright future in the agri-food robotics market?

When you look at the Autonomous Service Robots market: Very few large and very large machines are sold (a few dozen per year). On the other hand, there

are a lot of sales (hundreds of thousands per year) of small and very small autonomous machines which, by operating in a fleet, manage to replace the work of large and very large machines, while being cleaner, less expensive and easier to use. Two examples in B to C: robot vacuum cleaners and robot lawn mowers. An example in B to B: logistics robots in warehouses. This is the reason why we have chosen this bio-mimetic strategy (replacing a few large machines with swarms of small machines). With cohabitation with autonomous tractors, it is also the proof that there is a very big potential in this strategy.