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AgTech: A Practical Driver of Growth and M&A in Agribusiness

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Technology has always been central to agricultural productivity.

From mechanization and crop genetics to precision inputs, each wave of innovation has enabled farmers to produce more with fewer resources.

Compared to past decades, what's changing today is the speed and integration of technology (AgTech) into day-to-day farm operations. Digital tools, precision systems, and artificial intelligence (AI)-driven analytics are increasingly embedded across equipment, inputs, and management platforms.

Producers are using technology to improve output and reliability from existing assets rather than expanding land or labor. Precision farming, monitoring tools, and AI-supported analytics reduce variability in yields, improve planning accuracy, and limit exposure to weather and disease risk.

Technology is also lowering operating costs. More precise use of fertilizers, water, energy, and chemicals reduces waste, while automation and assisted machinery reduce reliance on labor.

These advancements protect margins and improve scalability, making technology-enabled operators more resilient and in turn, attractive targets in the broader agribusiness M&A market.

KEY MARKET DEVELOPMENTS

AgTech adoption continues to expand across U.S. agriculture, but the pace and direction are largely being shaped by practical economics rather than experimentation.

Larger and more commercially managed operations are typically the fastest adopters. Technologies that clearly improve margins, reduce labor requirements, or simplify operational management are seeing the strongest uptake. These include farm management platforms, variable-rate input systems, and compliance and planning software. Solutions without clear payback remain slower to scale.

Artificial intelligence has been used in agriculture for years, mainly in the background for forecasting and modelling. Today, newer systems are making outputs easier to interpret and act on. Instead of raw data, users receive clear recommendations tied to specific fields, crops, or tasks.

Rather than replacing operator judgement, these tools support day-to-day decision-making. They help prioritize field work, optimize input timing, manage seasonal complexity, and support compliance reporting.

Company	Activity
 JOHN DEERE	In 2025, Deere revealed new autonomous tractors and autonomy kits (integrating AI, computer vision and advanced guidance systems) aimed at automating tillage, spraying and other field tasks to tackle labour shortages and boost field efficiency.
 CNH INDUSTRIAL	At its 2025 Tech Day, CNH showcased AI-driven autonomy with automation across the full crop cycle, including autonomous tillage, guided and automated planting, targeted “sense-and-act” spraying, AI-assisted harvesting and cab-less autonomous robots.
 AGCO	In 2025, AGCO invested €54m to modernize its AGCO Power engine plant for advanced CVT and remanufacturing capacity, while accelerating rollout of precision, autonomy and data-driven technologies including retrofit autonomy, precision spraying and digital platforms across Fendt, Massey Ferguson, Valtra and PTx.



SECTORS PROGRESSING TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT



Equipment and Machinery

Agri-equipment is one of the clearest areas of near-term opportunity. Manufacturers are embedding sensors, GPS, telematics, and assisted automation into standard equipment rather than selling technology as an add-on. The addition creates recurring revenue streams through software subscriptions, connected services, and data platforms layered on top of equipment sales.



Precision Agriculture Platforms

Tools that combine satellite imagery, sensors, and analytics are being used to support day-to-day decisions. These systems help optimize input use and timing rather than chasing maximum yields. Adoption is growing as integration with machinery improves and users see consistent cost savings.



Automation and Input Management

Labor availability is a persistent challenge in agriculture. As a result, demand is rising for assisted machinery, robotic systems, and AI-supported irrigation and nutrient management. These tools reduce labor requirements and improve consistency, particularly in higher-value and labor-intensive crops.

INVESTMENT AND TRANSACTION ACTIVITY

Investment in AgTech slowed during 2025 as capital markets became more selective. However, the market has begun to stabilize around more mature businesses with proven customer adoption and clear operational value, establishing a stronger quality floor for the sector.

Investor preference has focused on solutions that deliver measurable productivity gains, cost savings, and labor efficiency. Said a different way, precision ag and automation have attracted materially more capital than biological inputs.

Strategic buyers have remained active, particularly among OEMs. John Deere has completed several targeted acquisitions in precision agriculture, including autonomous spraying and aerial scouting capabilities, while other OEMs such as Kubota have favoured partnerships to access innovation and accelerate time to market.

While large-scale exits have been relatively limited, transaction activity continues at the platform and tuck-in level, particularly among technology-enabled operators. As adoption continues to deepen and revenue models mature, this environment is expected to support more consistent M&A activity and improved exit opportunities over the medium term.

Deal Date: January 2025

Deal Size: Confidential

Segment: Equipment

Private equity firm Granite Creek's acquisition of Ritchie Industries, a U.S. maker of automated livestock watering systems, adds to its growing agribusiness portfolio. As a leading player in ruminants, the investment will support Ritchie as it plans to expand in beef and dairy, further penetrate the equine market, and introduce product enhancements and new products through accretive acquisitions. The company is targeting acquisitions in the hydration space and up to \$100m in enterprise value. Targets could serve a range of animal categories (from ruminants to zoo animals) or be manufacturers of other rotationally molded products for farms.



acquired by





NOTABLE TRANSACTIONS:

April-25



Acquired



Ag-Analytics provides agricultural land data and insights to inform agricultural land investment decisions

July-25



Acquired



Trade Genomics uses genomics and AI to unlock actionable insights into soil health

Aug-25



JOHN DEERE

Acquired



GUSS manufactures autonomous vineyard and orchard sprayers with remote monitoring solutions

Sept-25



Acquired



Premiere Tillage manufactures equipment solutions that enhance efficiency, production, and agronomic performance

LOOKING AHEAD

AgTech is no longer about experimentation or disruption. More and more, it's about steady improvements to productivity, cost control, and operational reliability. Technologies that fit into existing workflows and deliver clear economic benefits are gaining traction.

For acquirers, this creates an opportunity to invest in businesses that support predictable growth, recurring revenue, and operational resilience. As dealmaking takes shape across agribusiness, technology-enabled platforms are becoming a practical and defensible part of the M&A landscape.



PRACTICE TEAM



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Robert is a leading Corporate Finance Advisor with a wealth of experience in Debt Fundraising and M&A. He is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Ireland. He has developed a strong reputation for financing and refinancing business and property based portfolios, working across a broad range of Corporate Finance activities. He has significant commercial experience in undertaking M&A, Business Reviews, Due Diligences and Strategic Advisory for Corporate clients. Robert has developed a large client base across a broad range of sectors throughout Ireland.



Rick Thomas
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Rick Thomas, FOCUS' CEO, has 25 years of consulting, management and M&A advisory experience across industries including manufacturing, distribution, and food service. Prior to joining FOCUS, he served as Vice President at VSI, a boutique investment banking firm located in Washington, DC. He led M&A activities for publicly and privately held companies in the middle market, several of which have annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion.



Brian Barrett
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Brian Barrett, a FOCUS Managing Director, has extensive expertise in providing strategic advice to entrepreneurs, business owners and companies to assist them in achieving their strategic ambitions and preparing for significant value events. He has over 16 years of corporate finance experience working with SME's, large corporates and semi state bodies across Ireland. Brian has successfully project management and complete many significant transactions across multiple sectors, including retail, technology, food & beverage, agriculture, logistics, banking, energy and leisure.



Barry Calogero
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Barry Calogero, a FOCUS Managing Director, brings more than 30 years of executive management and consulting experience, with an emphasis on driving operational excellence and improving the enterprise value of companies around the world. He has deep expertise across industries including food & beverage manufacturing and distribution. Previous to FOCUS, he was COO of Coastal Sunbelt Produce, where he was responsible for operations, supply chain management, street sales, and asset velocity of the private equity-backed, \$300 million company.



Kate Elliott
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Kate Elliott is the Director of Research and oversees the production of research, financial modeling and analysis, and writing assignments that are integral to FOCUS' process-driven methodology for executing M&A transaction work.



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Beth Johnson, a FOCUS associate, supports buy-side and sell-side engagements as well as capital raising. Prior to FOCUS, she led capital raise events as the Director of Development at 4P Foods, a fresh foods distributor serving B2B and B2C customers across the mid-Atlantic region. Her experience includes working with founder-owned businesses in the natural/organic segment and agtech ventures, with an emphasis on regenerative agriculture.