MARK ALLEN GROUP TO ACQUIRE FARMERS WEEKLY

Friday 20 December, 2019

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acquire Farmers Weekly

London, Friday 20 December 2019 - Mark Allen Group (MAG) has announced its intention to acquire one of the prized jewels in publishing, the 85-year old weekly *Farmers Weekly*.

Reed Business Information Ltd (RBI), part of RELX, has agreed to sell the brand to MA Agriculture, a new company created by MAG to house Farmers Weekly.

The portfolio includes leading magazine brand Farmers Weekly, community website and online trading platforms on FWi.com, a growing events portfolio including the market leading industry Farmers Weekly Awards, newsletters and social media platforms supporting these publishing activities.

Farmers Weekly, the leading voice in farming, has been at the heart of the British farming industry since its launch in 1934. Today it has a circulation of nearly 42,000, with more than 26,000 subscribers.

RELX is a global provider of information-based analytics and decision tools for professional and business customers. This transaction does not include the agricultural connectivity, workflow, data and analytics business Proagrica, and reflects RELX's continuing strategic priority of focusing on its data and analytics business.

MAG, which employs 434 staff, has been rapidly expanding over the past decade. It currently boasts 100 magazines in 12 different sectors and organises up to 250 events, exhibitions and awards every year.

It has a turnover of £51 million and an EBITDA of £8.5 million. This will be its third acquisition in the past 12 months. In 2019 MAG acquired 12 magazines, mainly in aviation and auto, from UKi Media and Events, as well as The Engineer and its Subcon exhibition from Centaur Media.

Farmers Weekly will continue to be based at its Sutton offices, with 54 members of its staff transferring under TUPE.

The senior management team of publishing director and editor in chief Karl Schneider, sales director Dan Smith, marketing director Tony Hill and head of product Ed Morgan will all be joining the board of MA Agriculture.

Mark Allen, the founder and chairman of MAG, said: *"This really is a dream come true for me. I grew up in Somerset and my father was a concrete manufacturer working daily with farmers, so I know farmers and Farmers Weekly well. When I worked for RBI many years ago Farmers Weekly was regarded as the very top of the publishing mountain both inside and outside the company. I can't believe it is coming home so to speak. It represents the summit of our acquisition strategy. In future we will be looking to more organic growth, rather than acquisition, as our main focus."*

CEO Ben Allen added: *"This is a fantastic opportunity for the Mark Allen Group. Farmers Weekly will be an incredibly significant acquisition for the company. It further elevates our business and our position as one of the UK's leading independent providers of quality, specialist content. Our immediate aim now is to build on the outstanding work that RBI have done in developing the brand and ensure that Farmers Weekly continues to get the care that it rightly deserves. We were enormously impressed by the senior management team and I greatly look forward to working with Karl and his colleagues."*

Karl Schneider, publishing director and editor-in-chief of Farmers Weekly, said: "I'm really excited about embarking on the next chapter of the Farmers Weekly story as part of the Mark Allen Group. RBI has been a good home for Farmers Weekly, but it's great to be joining a company completely focused on and passionate about publishing and events. I know that this fertile environment will help accelerate our ambitious plans to extend Farmers Weekly's lead as the UK's top farming publication and events organiser."

Graeme McCracken, CEO of Proagrica said: "*This divestment reflects the strategic priority for Proagrica of focusing on its connectivity, workflow, data and analytics businesses. MAG is a great home for the*

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publishing portfolio, with a strong personal connection with the market, and we are confident that it will provide the right focus for the future of the Farmers Weekly team and business. I'd like to personally thank all the staff for their exceptional dedication and commitment over the years, I'm immensely proud of Farmers Weekly's achievements and we look forward to their continued success."

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Mark Allen Group

The Mark Allen Group is a family-owned private company, which was founded in 1985. The company employs 434 staff in four locations – Herne Hill, Dartford, Guildford and Wiltshire. Its 100 magazines are in 12 different sectors: healthcare; dental; social care; education; music; manufacturing and engineering; aviation; print; human resources; the built environment; critical communications; auto, transport and entertainment. It organises up to 250 exhibitions, conferences and awards every year. Flagship brands include: *Gramophone, Dental Update, British Journal of Nursing, Community Care, Nursery World, The Engineer, Machinery* and *Ground Handling International*.

Proagrica

Proagrica, part of RELX Group, is a global provider of independent connectivity and data-driven support solutions for the agriculture and animal health industries. We deliver actionable intelligence to drive business growth across the value chain. Our superior products and services connect and empower industry participants to address their key needs around trading, productivity and compliance. Our solutions are built around the key competencies of data connectivity and data analytics delivering seamless supply chain management, supply chain standards compliance, and customer insight and engagement, essential for businesses looking to improve their value offering and expand in the modern marketplace. Further information at www.proagrica.com

About RELX

RELX is a global provider of information-based analytics and decision tools for professional and business customers. The group serves customers in more than 180 countries and has offices in about 40 countries. It employs over 30,000 people of whom almost half are in North America. The shares of RELX PLC, the parent company, are traded on the London, Amsterdam and New York Stock Exchanges using the following ticker symbols: London: REL; Amsterdam: REN; New York: RELX. The market capitalisation is approximately. £36.9bn, €43.2bn, $48bn. www.relx.com

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