



The Jane Martinson interview

# Will Chase Farmer making a packet out of knobbly crisps

The unlikely entrepreneur has developed a successful business from a second-hand fryer in an old shed

Will Chase always wanted to be a farmer. He was almost 40 when a setback turned the founder of Tyrrells potato chips into an entrepreneur instead.

The success of his hand-fried, straight-from-the-field crisps in the past four years has changed Chase's life. "I want to be a serial entrepreneur," he says in an office that used to be a potato warehouse and is now a crisp factory. He has plans for an "all-natural" potato vodka, upmarket food halls selling local produce, oat-based healthy snacks, even a hotel. He is set to sell £12m worth of crisps this year, four times the amount he made from farming in a good year.

The story of how a struggling potato farmer turned into a crisp mogul started when a big manufacturer rejected a batch of his potatoes in 2002. Chase sent them to a leading purveyor of "premium" crisps and found a market for spuds that were a bit dark and knobbly. Yet he was unimpressed with the end product. "I tasted them and thought: we could do better than this."

