Future Agriculture e-magazine

E-ISSN: 3048-4553 (Online)

Popular Article

https://futureagriculture.co.in/

Article Id: FA-68 **ISSUE-September, 2026 | Issue-3 pp. 311-319**

Popular Article

OPEN ACCESS

Precision Agriculture: Transforming Farming Through Smart Technologies and Intelligent Applications

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Abstract

Agriculture is entering in a era of future technologies for improving productivity, profitability and resource-use efficiency. As due to increasing input costs, climate variability, labour shortages, declining natural resources and the need for sustainable production are driving the adoption of smart farming technologies. In this context, precision agriculture integrates tools such as agricultural robotics, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), soil and crop sensors, smart irrigation systems, remote sensing, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and GPS/GNSS-based machinery to enable timely and site-specific farm management. These technologies help farmers monitor crop and soil conditions, identify stresses at an early stage, apply inputs according to crop requirements and reduce unnecessary use of water, fertilizers and agrochemicals. Their combined application can support precision weed management, irrigation, nutrient management, crop monitoring, pest and disease detection, yield estimation and efficient farm operations. The integration of real-time sensing, automation, connectivity and data analytics is expected to make future agriculture more productive, resource-efficient, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable.

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence, Agricultural robotics, Crop sensors, Remote sensing, Smart irrigation.*

How to Cite this article: *Gupta, R., Dwivedi, S., & Tanwar, V. (2026).* Precision agriculture: Transforming farming through smart technologies and intelligent applications. *Future Agriculture e-magazine*, (3), 311–319.

1. Introduction

Agriculture is continuously transforming from conventional, input-intensive farming towards a more precise, intelligent and data-driven production system. The growing global population,

changing dietary requirements and increasing pressure on natural resources have created a need to produce more food while using land, water, fertilizers, pesticides and energy more efficiently. At the same time, farmers are increasingly facing challenges such as climate variability, irregular rainfall, water scarcity, rising production costs, labour shortages, soil degradation and increasing pressure from weeds, pests and diseases. Under these conditions, conventional uniform management practices may not provide the most efficient solution because soil characteristics, crop growth, moisture availability and pest or weed pressure can vary considerably within the same field. In this context, precision agriculture provides an effective approach for identifying and managing this variability through advanced technologies and location-specific information (Sishodia *et al.*, 2020; Soussi *et al.*, 2024). The modern precision agriculture is supported by a combination of digital and automated technologies. This comsists of soil and crop sensors can provide real-time information on moisture, temperature, nutrient status and crop conditions, while satellite and drone-based remote sensing can monitor crop growth, stress and field variability. The GPS/GNSS technology enables accurate positioning and field mapping, whereas automated machinery and agricultural robots can perform operations such as seeding, spraying, weeding and harvesting with greater precision. The smart irrigation systems can adjust water application according to crop demand and soil moisture conditions, helping to reduce unnecessary water use. In addition, artificial intelligence, machine learning and data analytics can convert large volumes of field data into useful information for timely decision-making. Connected sensors, Internet of Things devices, cloud-based platforms and digital farm-management systems further support the transition towards smart farming (Wolfert *et al.*, 2017). The integration of these technologies enables farmers to apply inputs according to actual crop and field requirements rather than following a uniform approach across the entire field. This can improve resource-use efficiency, productivity, profitability and environmental sustainability while reducing unnecessary input losses. Therefore, the future of agriculture will depend not on a single technology, but on the integration of robotics, UAVs, sensors, smart irrigation, remote sensing, AI and GPS/GNSS into connected and intelligent farm-management systems.

2. Major Components

2.1 Agricultural Robotics

This is an important emerging technology for performing repetitive, labour-intensive and precise farm operations. The autonomous or semi-autonomous robots can be used for crop scouting, mechanical weeding, precision spraying, harvesting and other field activities. These are equipped with cameras, sensors, GPS/GNSS and intelligent control systems, which help identify plants and distinguish crops from weeds or stressed plants. The integration of multiple sensing and navigation systems allows robots to operate more accurately under variable field conditions (Bechar & Vigneault, 2016).

2.2 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)

They provide a rapid and flexible method of collecting high-resolution information from agricultural fields. As these are equipped with RGB, multispectral, thermal or other sensors, which help in monitor crop establishment, plant health, water stress, weed infestation and disease development. They are particularly valuable because they can acquire high-resolution information over specific fields at the time required by the farmer (del Cerro *et al.*, 2021; Sishodia *et al.*, 2020). They can also be used for precision spraying and application of selected agricultural inputs. Their ability to cover fields quickly and provide site-specific information makes them particularly useful for timely decision-making, especially where conventional field monitoring is difficult or labour-intensive.

2.3 Soil and Crop Sensors

These provide real-time information about field and plant conditions. As they can measure parameters such as moisture, temperature, electrical conductivity and other soil characteristics, while crop sensors can assess vegetation condition, canopy development and plant stress. Such information helps farmers understand spatial and temporal variability within a field. When connected with farm-management systems, sensors can support precise decisions regarding irrigation, nutrient application and crop protection (Soussi *et al.*, 2024).

2.4 Smart Irrigation Systems

The smart irrigation combines soil-moisture sensors, weather information, automated valves, controllers and data-based decision systems to provide water according to actual crop requirements. Unlike fixed irrigation schedules, smart systems can adjust irrigation according to soil moisture, crop growth stage and

weather conditions. The drip irrigation integrated with sensors and automation can further improve water-use efficiency. The IoT-based irrigation systems can use field sensor information and weather forecasts to improve irrigation scheduling and optimize water use (Goap *et al.*, 2018).

2.5 Remote Sensing and Satellite Technology

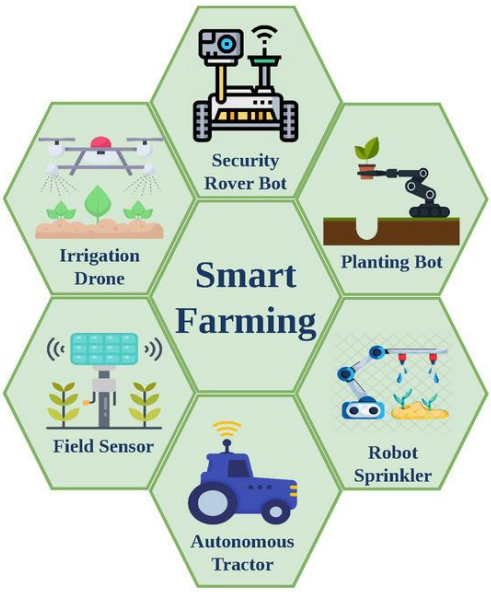
This provides information about agricultural fields without requiring continuous physical observation. As satellite imagery can cover large areas and provide repeated information on vegetation condition, crop growth, soil characteristics and water stress. The multispectral and thermal observations can help identify variations in crop health before they become clearly visible from the ground. It also has applications in crop monitoring, irrigation management, nutrient management, pest and disease detection, weed management and yield estimation (Sishodia *et al.*, 2020).

2.6 Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)

The artificial intelligence and machine learning are becoming important analytical components of precision agriculture. These technologies can process large amounts of data obtained from sensors, drones, satellites, weather stations and farm machinery. These AI-based systems can assist in crop and weed identification, disease detection, yield prediction, irrigation scheduling and decision-making. The machine learning can identify patterns within large and complex datasets that may be difficult to recognize through conventional observation. The combination of AI, IoT, smart sensors and data analytics is contributing to the development of intelligent agricultural systems (Soussi *et al.*, 2024; Wolfert *et al.*, 2017).

2.7 GPS/GNSS and Variable-Rate Technology

The GPS/GNSS-based systems enable accurate positioning, field mapping and navigation of agricultural machinery. They support operations such as precision sowing, fertilizer application, spraying and harvesting. When combined with field maps and sensor-based information, variable-rate technology can adjust the quantity of seed, fertilizer, pesticide or other inputs according to spatial requirements. This approach can reduce overlapping operations, improve input-use efficiency and minimize wastage while maintaining crop productivity. Also, remote sensing and precision technologies have already supported variable-rate input



applications in agricultural systems (Sishodia *et al.*, 2020).

Fig.1. Major Components of Precision agriculture

3. Major Applications

3.1 Precision Crop Monitoring

This uses drones, satellite imagery, crop sensors, remote sensing and AI to assess crop growth and health. These technologies can identify variations in crop establishment, canopy development, nutrient status and water stress across fields. As early identification of abnormal areas allows farmers to inspect and manage problems before serious yield losses occur. The repeated digital monitoring can also reduce dependence on conventional field scouting and support timely, site-specific crop-management decisions (Sishodia *et al.*, 2020; Soussi *et al.*, 2024).

3.2 Precision Weed Management

This combines drones, cameras, crop sensors, robotics and AI to identify weeds and their distribution within fields. As instead of treating the entire field uniformly, farmers can target herbicide application or mechanical weeding to areas with higher weed pressure. The image-based systems can distinguish crops from weeds using differences in colour, shape and canopy characteristics. This approach can reduce unnecessary herbicide use, lower input costs and support more efficient and sustainable weed management (del Cerro *et al.*, 2021; Sishodia *et al.*, 2020).

3.3 Smart Irrigation and Water Management

This integrates soil-moisture sensors, weather information, remote sensing, automated controllers and irrigation systems to supply water according to crop requirements. Unlike fixed irrigation schedules, these systems can adjust irrigation according to soil moisture, crop growth stage and weather conditions. The automated valves can deliver water when required and avoid unnecessary irrigation. As integration of sensors and data-based decision-making can improve water-use efficiency, reduce water losses and maintain

suitable soil moisture for healthy crop growth (Goap *et al.*, 2018).

3.4 Precision Nutrient Management

They uses soil sensors, crop sensors, remote sensing, GPS/GNSS and variable-rate machinery to identify differences in soil fertility and crop nutrient status. These fertilizers can then be applied according to crop requirements and field variability rather than using a uniform dose. This approach can improve nutrient-use efficiency and reduce unnecessary fertilizer application. It can also minimize nutrient losses to the environment and potentially reduce input costs while maintaining crop productivity (Sishodia *et al.*, 2020; Soussi *et al.*, 2024).

3.5 Pest and Disease Detection

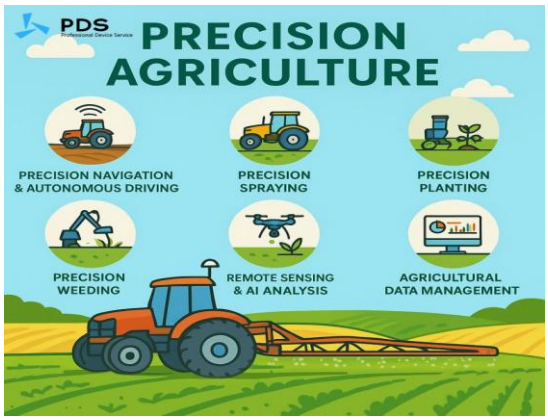
The uses of drones, remote sensing, imaging sensors and AI can help detect early changes in crop colour, canopy structure and temperature associated with pest and disease stress. As high-resolution images can identify affected areas that require further field inspection and timely management. The AI-based systems can assist in recognizing stress patterns and supporting rapid diagnosis. The early detection can enable targeted crop protection rather than uniform pesticide application, potentially reducing chemical use and improving the efficiency of pest and disease management (Sishodia *et al.*, 2020).

3.6 Precision Farm Operations

The use of robotics, GPS/GNSS and automated machinery can improve the accuracy and efficiency of sowing, spraying, interculture and harvesting operations. As GPS-based guidance helps machinery follow precise field paths and reduces overlapping passes, while robotic systems can perform selected operations with greater consistency. This automation can reduce labour requirements and improve the timing and accuracy of field activities. By minimizing unnecessary movement, fuel use and input wastage, precision farm operations can improve overall farm efficiency and productivity (Bechar & Vigneault, 2016).

3.7 Yield Estimation and Farm Decision-Making

The use of drones, satellite imagery, crop sensors, remote sensing and AI can support estimation of crop growth, biomass and potential yield before harvest. These data can be combined with historical records and weather information to improve yield prediction. As early estimates can help farmers plan harvesting, labour, storage, transportation and marketing activities. The



identification of spatial yield variability can also support investigation of low-performing areas. (Sishodia *et al.*, 2020; Wolfert *et al.*, 2017).

Fig.2. Major Applications of Precision Agricultural Technologies

4. Key Challenges

- High Initial Investment
- Small and Fragmented Landholdings
- Limited Technical Knowledge
- Poor Digital and Internet Connectivity
- Data Management and Privacy
- Lack of Skilled Technical Support
- Maintenance and Calibration Requirements
- Interoperability between Different Technologies
- Limited Awareness among Farmers
- Need for Region-Specific Technologies

5. Future Prospects

The future of precision agriculture will be based on the integration of robotics, drones, sensors, remote sensing, smart irrigation, AI, IoT and autonomous machinery into a connected farming ecosystem. Instead of operating as separate tools, these technologies will increasingly exchange information in real time and support automated decision-making. The farmers may receive field-specific recommendations for irrigation, nutrient application, weed and pest management and other operations through mobile and digital platforms. The autonomous machines and robots could undertake selected field operations with minimum human intervention, while satellite and UAVs data may provide continuous monitoring over large areas. The combination of smart sensors, IoT, big-data analytics and AI is expected to strengthen the data-driven nature of future farming (Soussi *et al.*, 2024; Wolfert *et al.*, 2017). The development of affordable, lightweight and user-friendly technologies will be particularly important for their adoption by small and medium farmers. The integration with weather forecasting and climate information can further improve resilience

to drought, heat and other environmental stresses. Thus, precision technologies have the potential to transform agriculture from conventional uniform management towards highly efficient, site-specific and intelligent production systems.

6. Conclusion

The precision agriculture is becoming an important pathway towards efficient and sustainable agriculture. The adoption of robotics, drones, sensors, smart irrigation, remote sensing, AI and GPS/GNSS can improve farm operations while reducing unnecessary use of water, fertilizers, pesticides, fuel and labour. Their greatest potential lies in integration, where field data are transformed into precise actions. Although high costs, technical limitations, fragmented landholdings and limited awareness remain barriers, continued technological development and farmer-oriented extension can improve accessibility. Therefore, it can support increasingly data-driven, resource-efficient, automated and climate-resilient food production.

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