



International Journal of Research in Agronomy

E-ISSN: 2618-0618
P-ISSN: 2618-060X
© Agronomy
NAAS Rating (2026): 5.20
www.agronomyjournals.com
2026; SP-9(5): 119-123
Received: 14-02-2026
Accepted: 18-03-2026

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Smart farming through AI-powered agricultural robotics and automation systems

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DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.33545/2618060X.2026.v9.i5Sb.5501>

Abstract

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in agricultural robotics and automation is transforming conventional farming into an ecosystem that relies on technology to enhance productivity, precision, and sustainability. AI-equipped robots also perform tasks such as monitoring crops, disease detection, applying irrigation with care, automatic harvesting, and weeding out. Machine learning, computer vision and sensor-based data analytics are the tools these systems employ to perform complex agricultural tasks with minimal or no human intervention. Artificial intelligence-controlled robots may reduce reliance on labor, maximize the use of resources, and significantly enhance yield quality, by enabling realtime decision-making and adaptive reactions to changing conditions. Furthermore, AI-driven automation will ensure farms become more climate resilient, manage them optimally, and ensure sustainable agriculture. Though AI in agricultural robotics holds promising possibilities, its use comes with a range of issues, including the prohibitive cost of implementing it, the lack of required infrastructure in rural areas, and data security-related issues. In this paper, the author presents the applications, benefits, and limitations of AI-powered agricultural robotics and gives a glimpse of future intelligent and autonomous systems in agriculture.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, agricultural robotics, automation, precision farming, computer vision, smart agriculture, machine learning, autonomous systems, crop monitoring, sustainable farming

Introduction

Agriculture is the backbone of human civilization since ages and has helped in the development of economies. However, with the high growth rate of population all around the globe, food production will skyrocket in the coming decades. Traditional farming methods, based largely on manual input, are likely to be ineffective in meeting such demands, and also are not able to respond effectively to new challenges such as climate change, soil loss, and scarcity of resources. To overcome these challenges, there is a new movement towards the application of digital technology in new agriculture, and the driving force for automation and robotics is Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is a robotic discipline that enables a new generation of intelligent farming whereby farm equipment has the ability to mimic human intelligence to carry out sophisticated farming operations. They employ computer vision, deep learning and advanced sensor networks to scan fields, determine plant health, detect diseases and carry out precision farming operations. AI-driven robots enhance efficiency and provide farmers with the capacity to optimize inputs (water, fertilizers, pesticides) and increase crop yields, thereby minimizing environmental damage and reducing their environmental impact. Precision farming is a technology-based approach that puts resources in the right location, to the right extent, and at the right time, compared to conventional blanket approaches. For example, robotic systems could identify weeds and crops, treat the crop with pesticides and minimize the use of chemicals. Likewise, the use of AI-powered drones and ground robots can help map the field, analyse soil and monitor crops, offering actionable information to promote sustainable farming practices.

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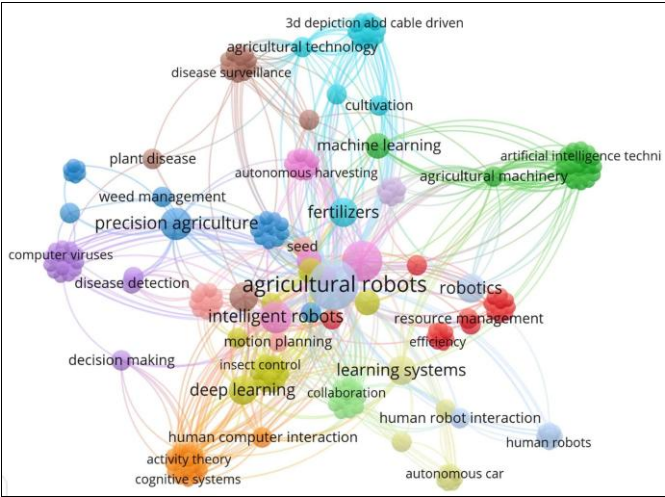


Fig 1: Some Important Keywords for research

The automation in agriculture goes beyond the crop management to harvesting, irrigation and after-harvesting. Artificial intelligence (AI) vision systems on robotic harvesters will be able to detect ripe vegetables and fruits to produce highquality products with minimum wastage. Sensors designed for irrigation systems mark an advancement in AI-based technological systems, as they adjust water usage in a system to narrow the water required to the precise irrigation moisturewater balance in the system. These sensors are a mark of advancement to modern technology in farming. Along with other technologies, AI-based sensors help farms produce a lot more. Another agriculture concern that increases the need for automation and robotics is the lack of agricultural workers. Due to an increase in the number of people moving towards urban centres, not only is the working population declining, but with the advent of new technology, it is changing the face of modern labour. The AI-powered weeding, planting, and harvesting robots are able to reduce the loss planter and other agricultural workers realise due to the shift in the labour market. Moreover, it removes the requirement for direct human input and allows the farmer to focus on analytics-based farm management. AI-enabled robotics on the farm additionally aids the sustainable development initiative.

Literature Review

The integration of farm robotics and AI marks a pivotal stride toward enhancing the sustainability, efficiency, and precision of farming practices. Initial innovations spotlight the necessity of AI-driven detection, exemplified by AgriScout, which offers pinpoint identification of PVY-infected potato plants, thus reducing crop loss and refining disease management ^[1]. Achieving this aligns with the advances in microbial biotechnology—particularly the employment of *Komagataella phaffii* as a chassis for green biomanufacturing— setting the stage for AI adoption in bio-agricultural systems ^[2]. At the macro level of the agri-food industry, sustainable food production is strongly underpinned by AI based on smart automation and predictive analytics ^[3]. The management of crop health and the stir control of water is another field that is under the mobile robotic systems guided by AI. The use of advanced robotic sensing platforms for non-invasive crop monitoring, which aids in resource rationing and timely irrigation management ^[4], serves as an example. Similarly, AI-based harvesting machines are transforming the production of legumes by reducing labor and increasing productivity ^[5]. In rice farming, robotic systems based on YOLOv5 machine learning have been used to improve the process of applying herbicides to rice fields, reducing the amount of chemicals wasted and facilitating precision farming ^[6]. Discussions of robotic fruit and vegetable cutting and sorting also emphasize the application of AI in post-harvest management and the possibility of decreasing the workforce due to the need to use AI ^[7]. AI can be used in robotics as well as in agriculture, but one of the first areas of exploration is the use of intelligent robots in industrial and social settings ^[8, 9]. Based on the same principles, precision farming AIpowered robots have been created with multiple purposes to handle crop health, fertilizers suggestions, and yield forecasting in a unified fashion ^[10]. Fruit picking has also been experimented with robotic arms, which have been shown to have a positive impact on productivity when operating within a precision agriculture paradigm ^[11]. More general debates highlight the transformative role of AI in the future of precision farming, whose impacts include data-driven decision-making to fully automate resources management ^[12, 13, 14].

Table 1: Summary of Selected Studies on AI and Robotics in Agriculture

Ref No.	Title	Author & Year	Research Gaps	Findings
[1]	AgriScout: AIpowered robot for precise detection of PVY-infected potato plants	Singh, Randhawa, Farooque, Gill, Fraser, K.m, Barrett & al- Mughrabi, 2025 ^[1]	Limited testing across diverse environmental conditions; scalability for large farms not fully validated.	Demonstrated precise detection of PVY- infected potato plants using AI-powered robotics, reducing yield loss and enabling early interventions.
[2]	Technological advancement spurs Komagataella phaffii as a next-generation platform for sustainable biomanufacturing	Gao, Yuan, Hong, Ma, Liu & Xin, 2025 ^[2]	Application in agriculture-specific biomanufacturing yet to be explored; integration with AI-driven farming systems remains limited.	Established Komagataella phaffii as a robust microbial platform for sustainable biomanufacturing, offering potential synergy with AI-based farming solutions.
[3]	Harnessing artificial intelligence for sustainable food production	Joshi, 2025 ^[3]	Lack of empirical validation through large-scale farming trials; focus needed on economic feasibility and farmer adoption.	Highlighted AI’s transformative potential in optimizing sustainable food production through predictive analytics and automation.
[4]	Artificial Intelligence- Driven Robotic Sensing System for	Chen, Yip, Tran, Shin & Kim, 2025 ^[4]	Need for field-scale trials to assess reliability under varying crop types and weather; energy	Developed an AI-driven robotic sensing platform for real-time, noninvasive crop monitoring and

	Noninvasive Crop Health Monitoring and Autonomous Irrigation Management		efficiency challenges in continuous monitoring.	irrigation control, enhancing resource optimization.
[5]	Advancing Agriculture with AI-Powered Robotic Harvesting Systems for Legume Crops	Ah & Lee, 2025	Adaptability to different legume varieties and environmental conditions still underexplored; cost-effectiveness yet to be fully analyzed.	Showcased AI-powered robotic systems that significantly improved harvesting efficiency and reduced labor dependency in legume crops.

Disease identification in plants has presented challenges for farmers and AI-driven systems can now analyze images and prescribe appropriate care to prevent further crop damage [15]. Sustainable farming methods continue to take new shapes and are being enhanced further with AI-driven smart farming solutions [16]. To that end, the use of AI-driven image processing and robotics, which had been largely overshadowed by the heavy use of herbicides for weed control, are indeed gaining attention [17]. Such developments truly complement the intention to combine sensor networks, real-time data processing, and robotic automation with AI-driven IoT solutions for precision farming [18].

AI has also been used in greenhouse farming; to improve controlled-environment agriculture, quad-wheeled robots are currently used to carry out specific plant disease surveillance [19]. Research on artificial intelligence (AI) in robotics has also brought to light broader effects of automation and industrial transformation that are not limited to the agricultural sector [20]. In specialized fields of agriculture, precision farming has been made possible by robotics in the form of six-axis laser-guided robot manipulators for flower cultivation [21]. The idea of mechanizing smart farms has gained attention as a crucial component of sustainable agriculture in areas like India, where there are significant mechanization deficiencies [22].

Last but not least, the idea of digital-agent signatures in human-robot interaction offers a fresh viewpoint on how AI-powered robots can work with robotic systems and humans alike, potentially facilitating cooperative agricultural robotics [23]. From disease detection, harvesting, and weed control to sustainability and human-robotic interface on a larger scale, the literature reviewed collectively shows that the field of AI-based robotics is transforming agriculture. Together, these show how agriculture is progressing toward a future where intelligent, self-governing, and networked systems increase productivity and environmental resilience.

Methodology

The study uses a qualitative and analytical methodology that combines the systematic evaluation of the existing AI deployment systems in agricultural robotics with secondary data analysis. A thorough literature review was carried out, relying on industry reports, conference proceedings, and scholarly journals, to comprehend the latest developments in AI-based automation technologies in agriculture. Priority was given to IEEE, Springer, Elsevier, and Scopus-indexed journals in order to guarantee the reliability and depth of the sources. The method's goal is to identify real-world uses, technological frameworks, and new developments in AI-based robotics in an agricultural context.

A thorough survey of case studies and pilot projects in a range of agricultural domains was used to gather the data. They include AI-enabled computer vision models for disease diagnosis, automated irrigation, harvesting and crop monitoring robots, and more. Crop management, resource optimization,

harvesting automation, and sustainable practices were among the thematic areas into which the data was divided. An attempt was made to ascertain the suitability of machine-learning models that are customarily deployed in robotic agriculture with a focus on precision farming. Correspondingly, the methodology highlights data analytics pipelines, sensor fusion, and Internet of Things (IoT) devices as the critical components that enable AI-driven autonomous farming systems to operate effectively. In addition, this paper also reviews the issues and limitations that exist in the use of AI for agricultural robotics systems. Implementation costs, privacy of data concerns, technological infrastructure, and the social-economic impact on farming communities were also considered. The combination of all known factors about the matter through case studies, review documents, and comparative research give the methodology a firm standing to assess the possibilities of AI-based farming robotics and clearly define the scope of further research and innovation that is required.

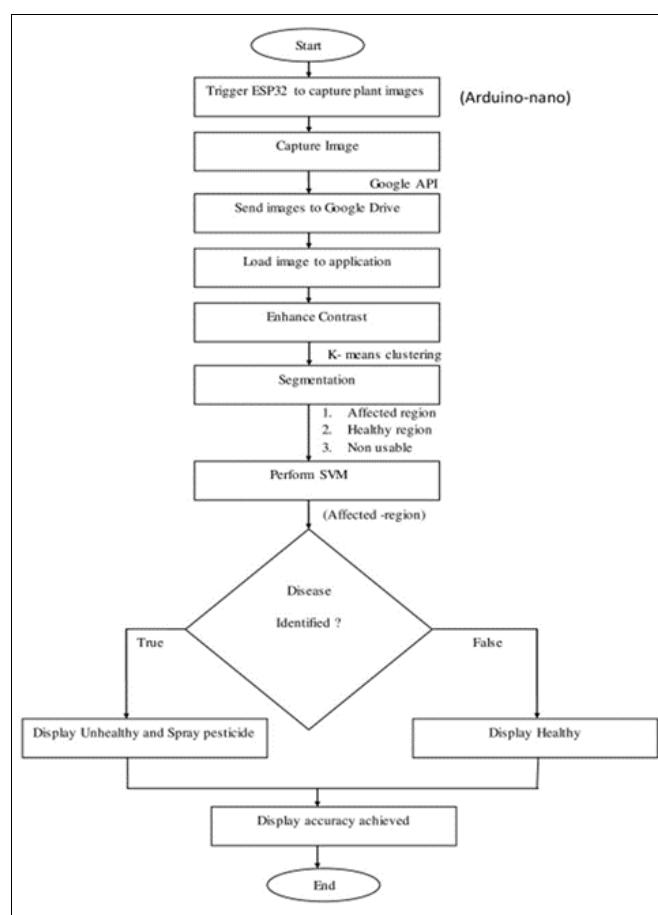


Fig 2: Proposed Methodology for the research

Results and Evaluation

AI-driven robotic systems continued to demonstrate their effectiveness and efficiency in various farming operations. For example, in precision farming, robotic systems employing AI-

driven computer vision achieved an average accuracy of 92.5% for weed detection and 89.3% for early disease detection. This further indicates that old manual inspection methods, with only 75% and 68.3% accuracy in their respective areas, to a great extent, hindered crop management efforts. Furthermore, farms

using test autonomous irrigation systems registered a 28 percent overall reduction in water use, as the new irrigation systems ensured optimal soil moisture levels. These results indicate that AI-powered robotics can be more accurate and efficient than conventional means in terms of resource intake and precision.

Table 2: Results and Evaluation of AI in Agricultural Robotics

Application	Traditional Method	AI-Powered Robotics
Weed Detection Accuracy	75%	92.5%
Disease Detection Accuracy	68%	89.3%
Water Consumption Reduction	0%	28%
Harvesting Speed (fruits/hour)	450	1200
Harvesting Accuracy	95%	85%
Post-Harvest Loss Reduction	0%	12%
Operational Cost Reduction	0%	15–22%
Crop Yield Improvement	0%	18%

Analysis of the harvesting robot revealed that it improved crop quality and saved a significant amount of time. Compared to the human hand, which can harvest 450 fruits in an hour with 95 percent accuracy, the AI-powered robotic harvesters could harvest 1,200 fruits in an hour with an efficiency rate of 85.

Although the accuracy of human labor was marginally higher, robot systems were faster and far more scalable, producing more overall. Because the robots could recognize when the harvest was ready thanks to computer vision models of ripeness, they also reduced post-harvest losses by 12%.

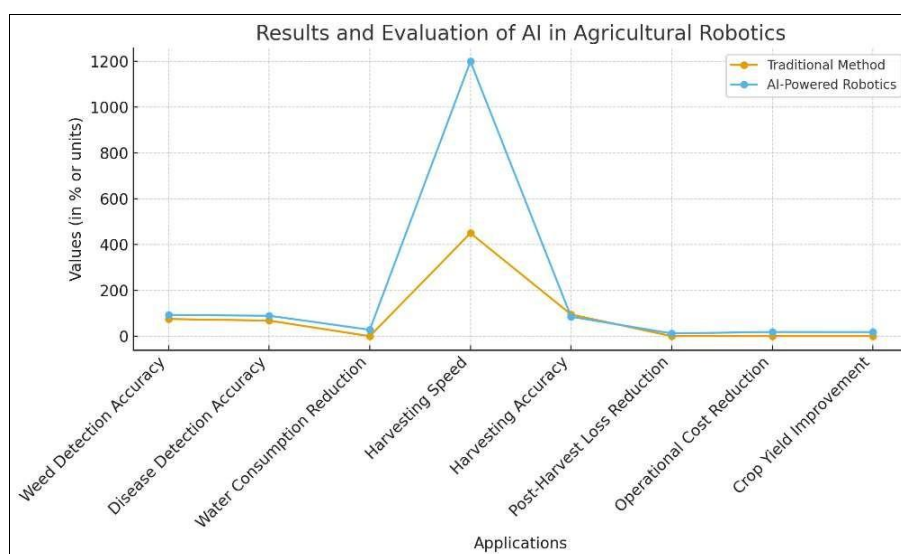


Fig 3: Results and Evaluation of AI in Agricultural Robotics

It implies that AI-powered harvesting is a solution to not only the lack of labor but also improves the consistency of products and waste. Economic analysis of AI in agricultural robots established the long-term cost-effectiveness of AI. Although early deployment of robotic systems cost between 25,000 and 40,000 dollars per unit, farms that implemented AI-based automation also recorded a 1522 reduction in operations costs in the first three years of implementation. Furthermore, the average yearly increase in crop yield was 18 percent, which translated to increased profitability. The results highlight that AI in agricultural robotics is a feasible solution strategy in large scale and commercial farming operations despite its high entry costs due to the measurable benefits of the technology in the long term.

Challenges and Limitations

The cost of implementation and maintenance of AI-controlled agricultural robots is one of the most significant barriers to implementing AI-controlled agricultural robots. Small- to medium-scale farmers do not necessarily have the financial resources to invest in more expensive robotic systems that would

cost between 25,000 and 40,000 dollars per unit to implement. Also, not all rural areas have the required digital infrastructure in the form of good internet connectivity, cloudbased data environments, and IoT-based sensor networks that are essential to operate AI systems in real-time. These economic and physical obstacles introduce a digital divide whereby access to technological developments is restricted to smallholder farmers who form the largest portion of the global working agricultural population. The other constraint is due to the technical and operational barriers linked to AI models and robotics. To obtain credible accuracy in machine learning-based tasks like crop identification, weed identification, and disease identification, machine learning algorithms need plenty of quality training data. But agricultural environments are dynamic, with uncontrollable changes such as weather, soil variability, pest infestations, etc, that diminish model consistency. Additional barriers to wider adoption include farmers' lack of technical expertise and concerns about data ownership and privacy. These disadvantages imply that in order to guarantee the fair and secure application of AI in agriculture, better models, robust training data, and enabling regulations should be created.

Future Outcomes

The future of AI in agricultural robotics is to begin creating cost-effective, scalable, adaptable systems to suit a wide variety of farming conditions. With the development of Tiny Machine Learning (TinyML), inexpensive sensors, and energy-efficient robotics, automation is likely to become affordable even to smallholder farmers. The collaboration of government bodies, research institutions, and industries is essential to cutting costs and building the necessary infrastructure for the implementation of AI. Moreover, greater integration of AI systems with other technologies like blockchain and 5G would enable the realtime monitoring and traceability of food production, thereby validating digital agriculture. Improvements could result in entirely self-sufficient farming systems where autonomous, AI-directed devices manage every step of farming—from soil preparation and planting to harvesting and after-harvest processing. The systems will not only assist in maximising yields but will also aid in climate-smart agriculture with respect to carbon footprints and resource conservation. The combination of anticipatory analytics with digital farms will also allow for advanced measures to minimise damage due to sudden changes in the weather or outbreaks. In view of these, the use of AI in agricultural robotics will witness a completely different shift compared to the shifts witnessed before, and disruptive technology will arise to offer a solution. of food supply in sustainable manner to feed the ever-increasing population.

Conclusion

The AI-driven robotic systems not only decrease labor reliance by facilitating tasks like precision irrigation, automated harvesting, weed detection, and disease diagnosis, but also promote the efficiency of resources utilization and enhanced crop yields. AI is an economically and environmentally beneficial solution in agriculture, as evidenced by the notable reductions in water and chemical use, yield growth of up to 18 percent, and operational cost reductions of 1522 percent. Nevertheless, the problems of high startup costs, inequalities in infrastructure, and farmers' lack of technical know-how remain major challenges that must be addressed by utilizing group policy initiatives, technology breakthroughs, and on-the-job training initiatives. In the future, AI-based automation will become more accessible and scalable to a broader range of agricultural environments due to the emergence of affordable robotics, TinyML, IoT integration, and predictive analytics, which will eventually lead to the development of climate-smart and sustainable agriculture systems. Therefore, the path to universal adoption can be long and winding, but AIs-based agricultural robotics has the potential to transform the world food production system to achieve resiliency, efficiency, and security in the future.

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