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AI APP DIAGNOSES CROP DISEASES AND ALERTS FARMERS VIA TEXT

  SUSTAINABILITY

A team of researchers developed an app that uses AI to diagnose common, and devastating, Eastern Africa crop diseases.

Led by scientists from the [International Institute of Tropical Agriculture \(IITA\)](#) and [Pennsylvania State University \(Penn State\)](#), a team of researchers created an app that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to identify East African crop diseases. First designed to identify problems with cassava, the team's recent award of a Big Data in Agriculture USD 100,000 grant will be used to expand the app's capabilities to include diagnoses of other root, tuber and banana diseases.

Currently being field-tested, the app's initial results show successful diagnoses even when a plant appears healthy. When combined with the text message service, thousands of smallholders will now be able to access advice and support much sooner than previously, as well as better contain the spread of a disease.

Food insecurity is a growing challenge faced by countries around the world, with technology now often used to gather in-depth knowledge from farmers who previously had no means of sharing their insights. In South Africa, [traditional fishers](#) can log catches, contribute to government data sets and build relationships with markets via an app. In Pakistan, a wearable for cows helps [farmers](#) track the health, fertility, location and general activity of their cattle. How can a range of connected crop care solutions be combined to create regional (or national) improvements?

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