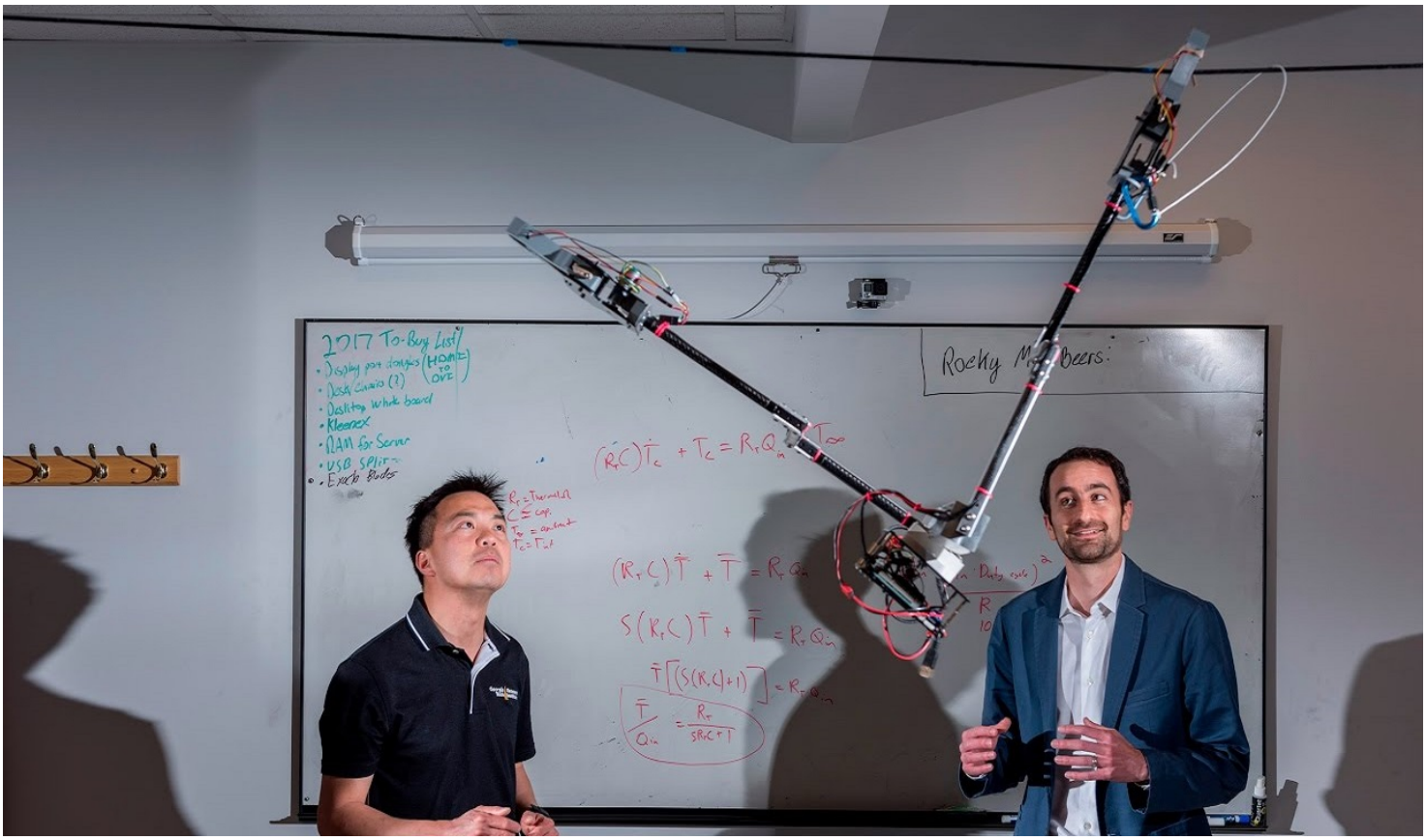

NEW SLOTH-LIKE ROBOT TO HELP FARMERS MONITOR CROPS

WORK & LIFESTYLE

Developed by the Georgia institute of Technology, Tarzan the Robot will hang from high wires and make crop monitoring a lot less laboursome.

As the world population constantly grows, the demand for food grows with it, leaving the agriculture industry the tough challenge of finding new ways to produce and maintain more and more food. A team from the Georgia Institute of Technology has been working on one new way to help monitor vast crop fields without needing vast manpower.

The idea behind Tarzan is that it will swing from high wires spread across crop fields and it'll be able to keep an eye on yield development by checking for health and taking pictures, which can be sent back to a farmer far away. The way it swings along the wires is very reminiscent of the way a sloth moves.

Asst. Professor of Mechanical Engineering Jonathan Rogers explained: "Persistent agriculture is a big thing, we have a lot more people to feed and will have a lot more people to feed than we ever had in history. The only way we can achieve the level of food production we're going to need in the future is to employ automation and robots."

They're hoping one day the robot will be entirely solar powered, so users can spend more time sat with a laptop monitoring data in the comfort of an armchair inspecting images sent back, rather than having to walk countless miles up and down the fields checking crops manually.

Robotics are playing an ever increasing part in the agriculture industry. A drone mimicking predators has been designed to protect crops from birds, and surveillance cameras have been installed in China to let shoppers view their melons being grown. What other ways could automation help meet our ever-demanding food supply needs?

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