

Syngenta and Plantix launch AI farming tools for farmers in Asia

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Syngenta and image recognition specialist, Plantix, have launched an artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled digital farming tools. Which is set to provide access to at least half a million smallholder farmers across the Asia Pacific.

The partnership gives Asia's smallholder farmers access to a global database of over 50 crops and 500 diseases, which will be available through Syngenta's Cropwise Grower app for farmers. The app uses the power of data to protect crop yields with on-demand advice on agricultural best-practices crop protection solutions.

With a rollout covering five countries and 750,000 hectares of farmland, the farming app will widen access to smart farming features for half a million farmers producing staple cash crops such as cotton, rice, corn, wheat and more.

Using AI, Cropwise Grower will allow farmers to take a photo of their crop problem, and in real-time, diagnose crop pests and diseases with 93 per cent accuracy. The Plantix algorithms analyse the image to identify the issue and provide a recommendation.

The uploaded images are also geo-tagged so that the app is able to alert farmers with early warnings when pest and disease pressures are identified in their surrounding area.

Targeting farmers in Asia's top agriculture economies, the Cropwise Grower app is now available in India in nine languages and will be progressively rolled out in Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, and Bangladesh.

“The emergence of challenges, such as new pests and diseases with climate change, coupled with extreme weather events, have made farming incrementally challenging. By bringing smart solutions closer to farmers, AI and data can help them overcome traditional constraints and information gaps. Our aim is to make digital tools as commonly used by smallholder farmers as the traditional rake here in the Asia Pacific. This partnership taps into our extensive regional networks to make this technology accessible at a large scale,” said Alexander Berkovskiy, APAC Regional Director at Syngenta.

Features of the “Cropwise Grower” app have been designed and tested with rural farmers in mind and include critical elements which are available offline for users in areas with intermittent internet connection. It is tailored to regional crops and diseases and will be available in local languages, including nine local languages across India. Historical diagnoses and recommended solutions can be stored for on-demand offline access by farmers.

“As part of our commitment to the communities in which we operate, we are investing heavily in digital and believe that it has the power to help farmers make better decisions, reduce crop losses and increase yields,” explained Chris Chen, APAC Head of Digital Transformation at Syngenta.

“Cropwise Grower” is the vehicle that allows us a direct connection, at scale, with millions of growers across the Asia Pacific. By ensuring the end-to-end user flow is 100 per cent automated, the partnership with Plantix allows an accurate diagnosis and recommendation to be provided in less than five seconds. This real-time feedback will be critical in driving behavioural change for our smallholder farmers across the region,” he adds.