

John Deere acquires precision ag technology that could reduce pesticide use by 90 percent

Tractor giant John Deere just spent \$305 million to acquire a startup that makes robots capable of identifying unwanted plants, and shooting them with deadly, [high-precision squirts of herbicide](#).

John Deere, established in 1837 to manufacture hand tools, announced it had acquired Blue River Technology, founded in 2011....

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Pesticides and other chemicals are traditionally applied blindly across a whole field or crop. Blue River's systems are agricultural sharpshooters that direct chemicals only where they are needed.

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The startup's robots are towed behind a regular tractor like conventional spraying equipment. But they have cameras on board that use machine-learning software to distinguish between crops and weeds, and automated sprayers to target unwanted plants.

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This season Blue River tested a second system for cotton farmers, ahead of a planned commercial launch in 2018. That system can target weeds with squirts of herbicide no larger than a postage stamp. Willy Pell, director of new technology at Blue River, says the system has shown it can reduce herbicide use by 90 percent.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Why John Deere just spent \\$305 million on a lettuce-farming robot](#)