

Will weed-killing robots replace controversial herbicides on the farm?

Weeds are the bane of a farmer's existence—the “most important of all crop pests,” as one scientist put it. They kill crops by hogging nutrients in the soil, water, space and light. Worldwide, they are the largest source of yield losses.

Since the mid-1990s, many row crop farmers have knocked out their weeds by planting bioengineered cotton, corn, and soybeans that withstand herbicides like glyphosate—the active ingredient in Roundup—and, more recently, like dicamba and 2,4-D. Now, though, there's mounting evidence that weeds are evolving to tolerate those herbicides

So these herbicides might not work on weeds, and they're more controversial than ever. Could there be another solution? Like, say, robotic weeding machines? If we can get robots to pick our strawberries, why can't they get rid of weeds, too? A handful of companies are working on it. Though the technology has been in development for years, weed-killing robots are still in their infancy, being trialed on farms across the world.

...

How does the weeding robot work? Essentially, a farm manager pilots the machine, which looks like a shield on wheels, onto a field as it breaks up weeds

Read full, original article: [Robotic weeders are racing to replace glyphosate and dicamba](#)