# MICROSOFT TO OPEN SOURCE ITS AGRI-TECH TOOLS TO ENABLE DATA-DRIVEN FARMING

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: E-technology in the aid of farmers

*Andrew Nelson reviews multispectral drone imagery in his office* | Photo Credit: Microsoft

Microsoft will open source the tools of its farm-focused technology, Project FarmVibes, to let researchers, data scientists, and farmers build on them to turn agricultural data into action. This could help boost yields and cut costs, the company said in a blog post on Thursday.

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Project FarmVibes is helping farmers gather farm-based data from sensors installed on the ground, drones in the sky and satellites in space. The first open-source release is FarmVibes.AI. This tool can help farmers make decisions at every phase of farming, from before seeds go into the ground until well after harvest.

The tool's algorithm, which run on Microsoft Azure, predict ideal amount of fertilizer and herbicide to be used and where to apply them; forecast temperatures and wind speeds across fields, informing when and where farmers should plant and spray; determine the ideal depth to plant seeds based on soil moisture; and tell farmers how different crops and practices can keep carbon sequestered in his soil.

Experts believe that open sourcing tech tools for farming can help tackle world's urgent food and climate change crisis. By 2050, we'll need to roughly double global food production to feed the planet but as climate change accelerates, water levels drop and arable lands vanish, doing that sustainably will be a huge challenge. One of the most promising approaches to address this is data-driven agriculture, said Ranveer Chandra, managing director of Research for Industry(RFI).

The RFI initiative of Microsoft seeks to identify advances in technologies like connectivity, robotics, and AI and use them in a variety of industries, including retail, agri-food, and others.

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