

# MASTERING AGRITECH AGAIN: COULD THE TRAINING OF INTERMEDIATE PLAYERS EASE THE DEPLOYMENT OF PRECISION AGRICULTURE?

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The ultimate goal of precision agriculture is to adjust crop husbandry to the nearest needs of each crop, in each specific environment with fair workload and social acceptance. The related agritech innovations aim to ease farmers' decision-making processes to meet those goals. However, some innovations proposed on the market, although technically viable, did not elicit so far the expected interest in the farming community. From the farm's perspective, deployment of precision agriculture solutions to their full potential demands well equipped and trained farmers. As their equipment carry innovation, manufacturers are expected to contribute to the end-users' training. However, from the manufacturers' perspective, multiplication of technological solutions generates a complexification of their interactions with farmers. Multinational equipment manufacturers appear though reluctant to enter in direct communication with their final customers. They prefer to involve intermediate players in the selling, maintenance, customer service and/or training of equipment. Those players are a key link in the supply chain as they eventually carry the image of the company for which they operate on the equipment. Thus, intermediate players face the burden to master the technology, in constant evolution, and the associated training needs at the interface between a sophisticated equipment and the end-user and its sociological characteristics (age, education, background, etc.). How to ensure that the intermediate players have the required tools and training to connect technological solutions and their use on the farm? This paper will discuss the role of education and vocational training for the development of the precision agriculture. We will start from a comparative review of some key national and European technical reports in the agricultural equipment and innovation domains. Our focus will be on the use of technical and scientific means that emerge to promote collaboration between farmers, engineering schools, students and experts in agronomy, ICT, and research, within a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. Then, through selected examples, we will question the role of intermediate players of the equipment supply chain in helping farmers and agricultural equipment manufacturers to realize their new technical and digital transition.

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