ISPA Newsletter 7(5) May 2019: Turing Prize, PA in Malaysia, PA Definition, Upcoming Events, Jobs

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ISPA

International Society of Precision Agriculture

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Turing Prize goes to 14th ICPA keynote speaker Yoshua Bengio

Fourteenth ICPA keynote speaker Dr. Yoshua Bengio was recently awarded the Turing Award often known as the “Nobel Prize of computing.” Dr. Bengio shares this honor with his colleagues Geoffrey Hinton and Yann LeCun together known as the “Godfathers of Artificial Intelligence.” In Montreal, last June, Dr. Bengio entitled his speech “From data to decisions with artificial intelligence .” Yoshua Bengio (computer science, 1991, McGill U; post-docs at MIT and Bell Labs, computer science professor at U. Montréal since 1993) authored three books. He has over 300 publications (h-index over 100), mostly in deep learning. He heads the Montreal Institute for Learning Algorithms (MILA), currently the largest academic research group on deep learning. He pioneered deep learning and his goal is to uncover the principles giving rise to intelligence through learning, as well as contribute to the development of AI for the benefit of all. His presentation was a highlight of the last ICPA in Montreal.

Precision Agriculture ISPA Definition: consultations are completed

The process leading to a definition of “Precision Agriculture” (PA) endorsed by the ISPA is in good shape. At first, a survey was completed by 80 participants to frame the key elements of a PA definition. From there, three potential definitions were proposed as seeds for the consultation step. Then, thirty-six contributors worked, under the leadership of Dr. Alex Escola from Lleida University, using a Codigital platform to gradually come at a few potential definitions out of the 17 considered in the discussions. The process generated 321 edits and 3365 votes with a final consensus rating of 82%. On average, the contributors spent 34 minutes of their time to the task. The next step is in the hands of the ISPA Board which will have to come up with a final decision on this new PA definition.

Precision Agriculture in Malaysia

Malaysia has an active precision agriculture (PA) research community, but little commercial use.

“PA has been only implemented in research scale. I do not think there is any report of PA being implemented in commercial scale. I also do not think there is anyone out there that has any report or statistics about this. There is actually no report, even for major oil palm plantations,“ said Prof. Siva Kumar Balasundram, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Department of Agriculture Technology. Prof. Siva is the Malaysia country representative for the ISPA.

This is confirmed by Dr. Hari Krishna of Sime Darby (largest oil palm producer in Malaysia): "*Currently quite low adoption mainly due to cost and that most uses are still stuck at R&D phase with difficulty to scale up to commercial phase*"

There have been numerous efforts to promote PA in Malaysia. For example, in 2017 Space Exploration Asia partnered with Adaptive AgroTech Research Group International, and in collaboration with the Massey University of New Zealand and the New Zealand Center for Precision Agriculture, to develop study tour to New Zealand aimed at showing Malaysian farmers and agribusiness how PA could be used (https://www.precisionag.com/digital-farming/new-zealand-study-tour-demonstrates-recent-advances-in-precision-agriculture/).

Dr. Redmond Shamshiri, formerly of UPM and now with the Agricultural Technology and Bioeconomy Institute (ATB) in Potsdam, Germany, said that precision agriculture research in Malaysia is occurring in universities, government research institutes, large agribusinesses and start up companies. The government agencies doing precision agriculture research include: the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute, the Malaysian Palm Oil board, and the Malaysian Cocoa Board. In the 2001-2007 period the Malaysian Remote Sensing Agency (MRSA) had a project for precision agriculture in rice, but farm level adoption remains low. A search of Google Scholar for "Malaysia Precision Agriculture Rice" or "Malaysia Precision Agriculture Oil Palm" reveals many published articles from the Malaysian research.

Upcoming Events

25-27 FEB 2025
GIS & Drone Applications in Agriculture Conference

29 JUN - 3 JUL 2025
15th European Conference on Precision Agriculture
Barcelona, Spain
ecpa2025.upc.edu/

22-31 AUG 2025
XXXII ISSCT Centennial Congress
Cali, Colombia
issctcennial.com/

14-16 OCT 2025
11th Asian-Australasian Conference on Precision Agriculture
Chiayi, Taiwan
ispag.org/Events/ACPA

2-4 FEB 2026
International Crop Modeling Symposium (iCROPM2026)
Florence, Italy

Week of 13 JUL 2026
17th International Conference on Precision Agriculture and the 11th Brazilian Congress on Precision Agriculture
Porto Alegre, Brazil

ispag.org/icpa

See the ISPA website for a complete list of events.
Do you have an event that would be of interest to our members? Send us an email to let us know.

Jobs Listing

- Postdoc in Digital Agronomy for Climate Resilient Perennial Agriculture
- Tenure Track Assistant Professor in soil spectroscopy at Department of Agroecology, Aarhus University
- Assistant or Associate Professor of Extension Soil Management - University of Kentucky - Department of Plant and Soil Sciences
- Precision Agriculture Technologies Extension Specialist - University of Tennessee - Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science
- Assistant Professor (Extension) - Mississippi State University - The Department of Agricultural & Biological Engineering
- University of Georgia - Assistant Professor - Extension Specialist Precision Agriculture Systems

Do you have a job you would like to post to the ISPA website? Please send your job announcement, a short description, and cutoff deadline for applications to info@ispag.org

Contribute to the ISPA Newsletter

Do you have a precision ag event, project, or news article that our members would be interested in? Please let us know. We post events, job opportunities, and news from members from around the globe. Email info@ispag.org or use the handy online form to submit your contribution.

Precision Agriculture Definition

Precision Agriculture is a management strategy that gathers, processes and analyzes temporal, spatial and individual plant and animal data and combines it with other information to support management decisions according to estimated variability for improved resource use efficiency, productivity, quality, profitability and sustainability of agricultural production.

The International Society of Precision Agriculture (ISPA) is a non-profit professional scientific organization.
The mission of ISPA is to advance the science of precision agriculture globally.

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