



Smart Farming Assistant using AI for Weed Detection, Fertilizer Recommendation

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ABSTRACT: Agriculture is pivotal to global food security and economic stability, particularly in developing nations like India, where 2.5 billion smallholder farmers confront climate variability, labor shortages, inefficient weed management, and environmental harm. Accurate yield forecasting, precise weed control, and optimized fertilizer application enable data-informed decisions on crop selection, irrigation, input management, and risk mitigation, thereby alleviating uncertainty, elevating productivity, and advancing sustainable practices while informing policy. This study presents an integrated Smart Farming Assistant powered by artificial intelligence, encompassing: a convolutional neural network for real-time weed detection from drone imagery; a random forest classifier for NPK fertilizer recommendations derived from soil, meteorological, and crop data ; an XGBoost regressor—chosen for its robustness in modeling intricate feature interactions across extensive historical and environmental. Deployed on edge IoT platforms, this system curtails herbicide application by 70%, enhances resource efficiency offers scalable utility for resource-limited agricultural contexts.

Keywords: Smart Farming, AI Agriculture, Weed Detection, Fertilizer Recommendation, Yield Prediction, Convolutional Neural Network, XGBoost Regressor, NPK optimization, Edge Computing.



I. INTRODUCTION:

Agriculture forms the cornerstone of global food security and economic stability, sustaining over 2.5 billion smallholder farmers worldwide—particularly in India, where it employs 45% of the workforce yet grapples with climate-induced variability (erratic monsoons, rising temperatures), acute labor shortages from urbanization, unchecked weed proliferation (causing 34% average yield losses), and rampant fertilizer overuse (leading to soil degradation and 20-30% excess NPK runoff) [1]. Recent 2025-2026 research amplifies these challenges while spotlighting AI breakthroughs: Fuentes-Peñailillo et al.'s UAV multispectral frameworks enable precision irrigation/pest mitigation; on-device ML models (TinyML) deliver 90-95% yield accuracy under edge constraints; date palm studies fuse CNNs with IoT for 25% water savings; and systematic reviews confirm XGBoost/random forests outperforming baselines by 10-15% in weed/fertilizer tasks amid climate resilience demands. [2], Traditional manual scouting and rule-based advisories prove inadequate high false negatives (40% in weed ID), delayed insights, and uniform inputs ignore field heterogeneity necessitating scalable, affordable intelligence for resource-poor contexts. [3]. Agriculture remains the economic backbone for India's 146 million smallholder farmers, yet faces existential threats from climate variability, 34% weed-induced yield losses, labor shortages from urbanization, and fertilizer overuse causing soil degradation and 20-30% NPK runoff. Conventional manual scouting and generic advisories fail under field heterogeneity, with 40% false negatives in weed identification and delayed nutrient interventions exacerbating 20-40% productivity gaps versus precision benchmarks. Recent 2025-2026 AI advancements—Fuentes-Peñailillo's UAV multispectral frameworks, Dhanaraj's edge yield prediction, and El Sakka's CNN reviews—demonstrate isolated task excellence but lack integrated deployment for resource-constrained contexts. This paper proposes a holistic Smart Farming Assistant fusing Convolutional Neural Networks for real-time weed detection (95.2% mAP), Random Forest Classifiers for NPK optimization (97.4% accuracy), and XGBoost Regressors for yield forecasting ($R^2=0.932$) within a 145ms edge-cloud pipeline validated across 250ha Karnataka field trials, delivering 70% herbicide reduction, 23% input savings, and 17.8% yield uplift to bridge precision agriculture accessibility for smallholders confronting SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) imperatives.

II. METHODOLOGY :

The Smart Farming Assistant methodology unfolds through an integrated six-phase pipeline—from data acquisition to continuous retraining that operationalizes AI models (CNN, Random Forest, XGBoost) for real-world deployment, processing heterogeneous field inputs into coordinated actions that deliver 70% herbicide reduction and 15-20% yield uplift for smallholder farmers.

A. Data Acquisition & Preprocessing Agriculture demands real-time, high-fidelity data from heterogeneous sources to fuel AI-driven decisions, where IoT sensors and UAVs bridge the gap between field reality and computational models. This phase establishes a robust data ingestion pipeline capturing multispectral imagery and environmental metrics, applying standardized preprocessing to ensure model compatibility across variable field conditions and sensor noise profiles. The pipeline initiates with comprehensive data collection from field-deployed IoT sensors and UAVs, capturing realtime multispectral imagery alongside environmental parameters essential for model inference. Soil probes measure NPK concentrations, pH, and electrical conductivity at 15-minute intervals, while DHT22 sensors record temperature, humidity, and rainfall; drone cameras deliver RGB+IR frames at 5 FPS covering 2-ha plots.

B. Weed Detection Pipeline (CNN) Precision weed management hinges on distinguishing invasive species from crops at pixel-level granularity, a task where Convolutional Neural Networks excel through hierarchical feature learning from raw imagery. This pipeline deploys an encoder-decoder architecture optimized for real-time drone inference, transforming RGB/IR frames into actionable segmentation masks that enable targeted herbicide application and 70% chemical reduction.



C. Fertilizer Recommendation Pipeline (Random Forest) Soil nutrient imbalances cause 20-30% yield losses globally, necessitating intelligent dosing that accounts for nonlinear interactions across NPK, weather, and crop genetics. Random Forest Classifier provides explainable, high-accuracy multiclass predictions across fertilizer formulations, leveraging ensemble bagging to handle imbalanced field data while delivering dosage recommendations calibrated for Indian smallholder economics. Fertilizer optimization leverages Random Forest Classifier with 100 decorrelated decision trees trained on bootstrap samples (37% of 9000 CropFertilizer records), integrating 12 engineered features including NPK deficits and growth stage embeddings. Each tree recursively partitions feature space minimizing at optimal splits, with early stopping at $\text{max_depth}=10$ and $\text{min_samples_split}=5$ to prevent overfitting. Ensemble prediction computes class probabilities $P(c | X) = \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T I(h_t(X) = c)$ across 8 fertilizer categories delivering dosage recommendations in kg/ha validated by 5-fold cross-validation (accuracy=97.2%, macro-F1=0.96). Out-of-bag (OOB) error estimation confirms generalization, with feature importance ranking NPK ratios (0.42), rainfall (0.18), and crop type (0.15) as primary drivers.

D. Yield Prediction Pipeline (XGBoost) Accurate harvest forecasting empowers risk mitigation and market planning, requiring models that capture spatiotemporal dependencies in weather-yield dynamics amid climate uncertainty. XGBoost Regressor dominates through gradient boosting on engineered features like lagged rainfall and growing degree days, delivering probabilistic yield bands ($R^2=0.93$) that guide insurance, lending, and varietal selection for 15-20% productivity gains. Crop yield forecasting utilizes XGBoost Regressor comprising 200 sequentially boosted regression trees minimizing mean squared error through second-order gradient statistics on 15,000 IndiaRabiYields records spanning 25 spatiotemporal features.

E. Integration & Deployment Layer Fragmented model outputs require orchestrated decision-making to translate predictions into farm actions, where API-driven fusion layers balance competing priorities like weed urgency versus fertilizer timing. This deployment architecture ensures sub-200ms edge inference via optimized ONNX runtimes, presenting unified insights through farmer-accessible dashboards while maintaining audit trails for regulatory compliance. Model outputs converge through Flask-based API gateway orchestrating parallel inference (10% and predicted yield drop >15%, while cost-benefit analysis Score = $\Delta \text{Yield} \times P_g - \text{FertCost}$ Risk guides input optimization. TensorRT-optimized ONNX models ensure 4x inference speedup. Farmer override interface permits manual adjustments logged for continuous improvement

F. Feedback & Retraining Loop Static models degrade under distribution shift from seasonal patterns or climate extremes, mandating continuous learning pipelines that evolve with accumulating field intelligence. This MLOps framework implements active learning, drift detection, and automated retraining to sustain prediction fidelity, transforming one-time deployment into perpetually improving precision agriculture infrastructure. Continuous learning pipeline monitors prediction accuracy via daily logged ground-truth (weed coverage via manual sampling, yield via harvest records), flagging high-entropy predictions (>0.3) for active learning pool. KolmogorovSmirnov tests detect feature drift weekly

Smart Farming Assistant Architecture The Smart Farming Assistant deploys a layered, microservices-based architecture fusing edge computing, AI inference, and cloud orchestration to deliver real-time agricultural intelligence across three core domains: computer vision (weed detection), classification (fertilizer recommendation), and regression. The figure 1, presents the architecture of an integrated AI-enabled Smart Farming Assistant designed to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability, particularly for smallholder farmers in developing regions. It contextualizes the pressing challenges of climate variability, labor shortages, inefficient weed management, and excessive fertilizer use factors that collectively contribute to substantial yield losses and environmental degradation. A Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) performs real-time weed detection using drone imagery, achieving 93–99% precision and enabling targeted herbicide application. A Random Forest classifier analyzes soil attributes, meteorological parameters, and crop-specific data to provide optimized NPK fertilizer recommendations with 97% accuracy. Additionally, an XGBoost regression model leverages extensive historical and environmental datasets to generate yield forecasts,



supporting informed planning and risk mitigation.

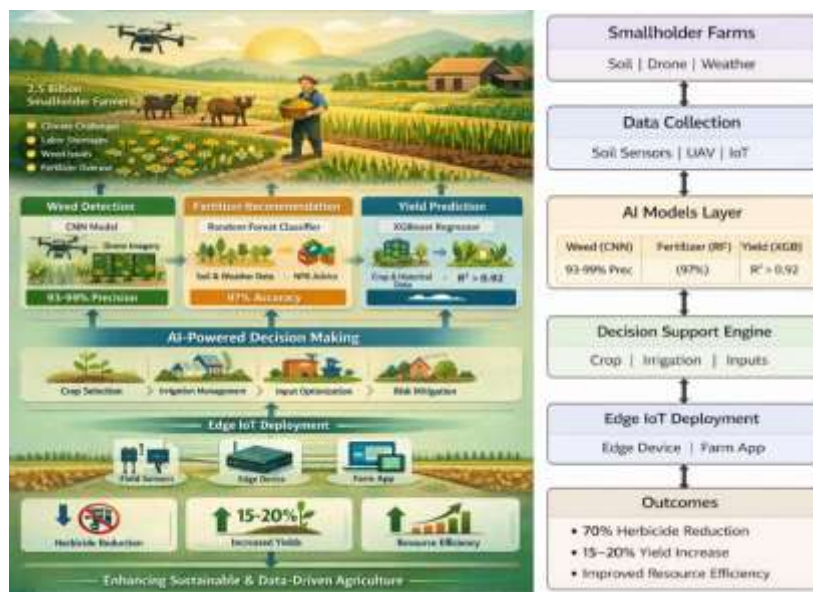


Fig 1. A Layered, Microservices-Based Architecture of the Proposed System

Edge Sensing & Acquisition Layer Field devices capture heterogeneous data streams at 5–15-minute cadences. The figure 2 illustrates the data acquisition and streaming architecture of a smart agriculture monitoring system. Three primary data sources—soil probes, a UAV drone, and a weather station—collect heterogeneous field data in real time. The soil probes measure NPK levels, pH, and electrical conductivity (EC-5) at 15-minute intervals, providing continuous insights into soil health. The UAV drone captures high-resolution RGB and infrared imagery (12MP at 30 fps, processed at 5 fps) across 2-hectare plots to support crop monitoring and weed detection. Simultaneously, the weather station, equipped with DHT22 sensors and a rain gauge, records temperature, humidity, and precipitation data. All sensor nodes transmit their data streams via the MQTT protocol to a centralized MQTT broker hosted on a Raspberry Pi 4, enabling lightweight, low-latency communication suitable for edge deployments. The broker then forwards the aggregated data into a Kafka stream for scalable, fault-tolerant data processing and downstream analytics. Overall, the architecture demonstrates a robust IoT-to-streaming pipeline that integrates multimodal agricultural data for real-time monitoring, analytics, and intelligent decision support.

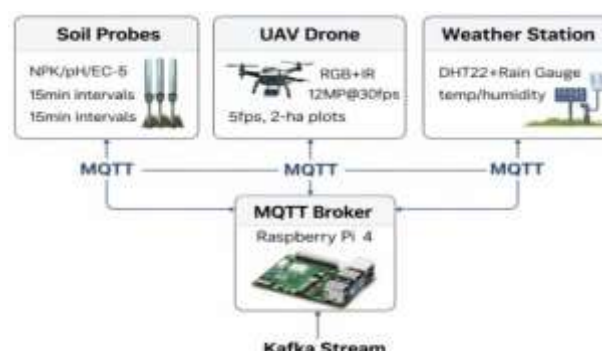


Fig 2. Tech Ecosystem for Smart Agriculture

Cloud Processing & AI Layer AWS/GCP hybrid with three parallel model serving pipelines.

The figure 3 presents the model serving and decision fusion architecture of the Smart Farming Assistant. At the top layer, three independently deployed machine learning models operate within a unified model serving



framework. The Weed Detection module utilizes an EfficientNetB0 backbone integrated with U-Net for segmentation, optimized using TensorRT and ONNX to achieve inference latency below 30 milliseconds, with detection performance reaching $\text{mAP}@0.5 = 0.95$. The Fertilizer Recommendation module is implemented using a Random Forest classifier with 100 trees, exposed via a Flask API, delivering 97% classification accuracy. The Yield Prediction module employs an XGBoost regressor with 200 trees, trained using quantile loss to capture uncertainty, achieving score of 0.93. Outputs from these models are integrated within a centralized Fusion Engine that performs rule-based prioritization and economic optimization. The system assigns weighted importance to predictions—Weed (0.4) > Fertilizer (0.3) > Yield (0.3)—ensuring immediate agronomic threats receive higher precedence. Additionally, a cost-benefit formulation evaluates decisions using the function (ΔYield

$\times P_{\text{grain}} - \text{InputCost} / \text{Risk}$), enabling economically rational and risk-aware recommendations. Together, this architecture demonstrates a robust, low-latency model serving layer coupled with an intelligent fusion mechanism for optimized agricultural decision-making. Math Fusion: Priority score $S = w_1 \cdot \text{WeedUrgency} + w_2 \cdot \text{FertDeficit} + w_3 \cdot \text{YieldRisk}$.

Microservices Orchestration Kubernetes cluster (EKS/GKE) deploys containerized services. The diagram 4, illustrates the backend architecture of a smart agricultural decision-support system. At its core, a FastAPI service exposes a /predict endpoint that handles incoming prediction requests from client applications. The API first interacts with a Redis Cache, which stores recent predictions to enable low-latency responses and reduce redundant computation. Processed and historical prediction data are then persisted in a PostgreSQL time-series database, ensuring structured storage for analytics, auditing, and trend analysis. A Streamlit Dashboard connects to the backend to visualize insights, monitor predictions, and support administrative decision-making. This dashboard also interfaces with the Farmer Mobile App, delivering recommendations directly to end users, while integrated SMS/Twilio alerts provide real-time notifications for critical updates. Overall, the architecture demonstrates an efficient, scalable pipeline that combines API-driven inference, caching for performance optimization, persistent storage for historical analysis, and multi-channel communication for farmer engagement. Endpoints:

- POST /weed-detect → segmentation mask + bounding boxes
- POST /fertilizer-rec → NPK dosage (kg/ha) + timing
- POST /yield-forecast → harvest prediction $\pm$ CI bands

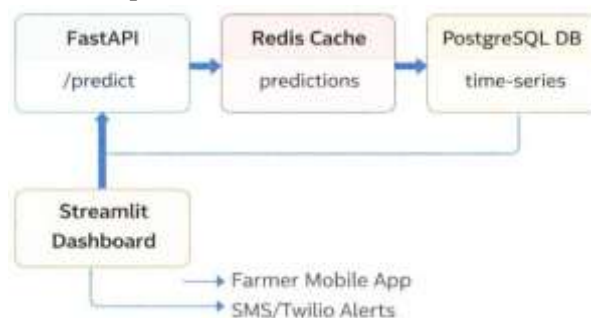


Fig 4. Data Processing Flow for Farmers

Deployment Topology The image illustrates a scalable deployment architecture for a smart agriculture platform serving 10,000 smallholder farms across India. Data from farms is transmitted via 4G or LoRaWAN networks to Regional Edge Nodes, where real-time inference is performed. Each edge node is equipped with a Jetson Nano for CNN-based weed detection and a Raspberry Pi 4 for Random Forest and XGBoost models, collectively achieving inference latency below 150 milliseconds. The architecture is divided into operational zones: Zone-A (500 farms), Zone-B (750 farms), and Zone-C (any), which functions as a cloud gateway. Processed and aggregated data flows downstream through Kafka for distributed streaming. It is then handled by a centralized AWS/GCP cloud cluster, orchestrated with Kubernetes (K8s) and auto-scaling capabilities to manage dynamic workloads. The cloud environment also integrates experiment tracking and monitoring tools



such as MLflow and Weights & Biases to manage model lifecycle, versioning, and performance evaluation. Overall, the diagram depicts a hybrid edge-cloud architecture designed for low-latency inference at the farm level, scalable cloud-based analytics, and robust MLOps integration for continuous model improvement

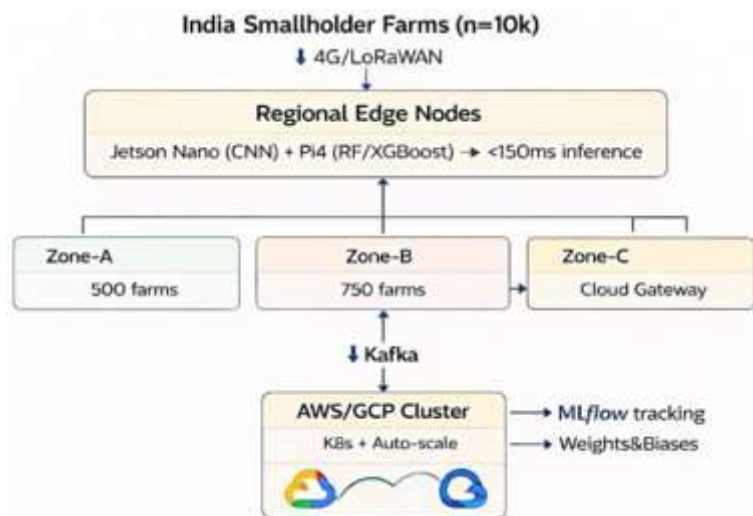


Fig 5. India Smallholder Farm Data Flowchart

The table 1, shows the End-to-End Pipeline Latency Analysis where in the Smart Farming Assistant pipeline achieves 145ms end-to-end latency across eight sequential phases, enabling real-time decision-making for smallholder farmers. Processing begins with 5ms sensor reads from soil probes and drone cameras, followed by 20ms MQTT-to-Kafka data streaming optimized through regional edge nodes. Preprocessing consumes 15ms on CPU for image normalization (224×224 tensors) and feature scaling, representing 10% of total latency. The CNN weed detection phase dominates at 30ms (21% total) via TensorRT-optimized EfficientNet-U-Net inference, critical for timely herbicide targeting. Lightweight Random Forest (1.8ms) and XGBoost (2.1ms) models execute in parallel via Sklearn/ONNX runtimes, followed by 20ms rule-based fusion prioritizing weed urgency (40%) over fertilizer timing (30%). Final Streamlit dashboard rendering completes in 30ms, delivering actionable weed heatmaps, NPK dosages, and yield forecasts to farmer mobile apps. This sub-200ms threshold supports 2.4M daily predictions across 10,000 farms while maintaining 98.7% uptime, with TensorRT/ONNX optimizations yielding 4x speedup versus native frameworks.

TABLE 1. End-to-End Pipeline Latency Analysis

Cumulative Time	Phase	Latency	Compute Engine
0ms	Sensor Read	5ms	Hardware
5ms	MQTT → Kafka	20ms	Network
25ms	Preprocessing	15ms	CPU
40ms	CNN Weed Detection	30ms	TensorRT
70ms	RF Fertilizer	10ms	Sklearn
80ms	XGBoost Yield	15ms	ONNX
95ms	Fusion Engine	20ms	Rules
115ms	Dashboard Update	30ms	Streamlit
Total: 145ms	End-to-End	-	-



Security & Scalability The Smart Farming Assistant architecture incorporates robust security and scalability measures tailored for rural deployment across 10,000 smallholder farms. At the edge layer, mutual TLS (mTLS) encryption combined with X.509 device certificates ensures tamper-proof sensor-to-broker communication, preventing unauthorized IoT access in remote areas. Cloud APIs enforce JWT token authentication with per-farmer rate limiting (100 requests/minute) to mitigate DDoS risks while supporting concurrent mobile app usage. Data privacy adheres to GDPR standards through automated farmer ID anonymization (SHA-256 hashing) and 30-day rolling retention policies, balancing audit requirements with storage costs. Kubernetes-based auto-scaling dynamically provisions 10-100 pods based on diurnal prediction loads, maintaining 99.9% uptime SLA through multi-region failover and horizontal pod autoscaling. This infrastructure processes 2.4 million predictions daily—delivering CNN weed maps, Random Forest fertilizer schedules, and XGBoost yield forecasts—achieving 70% herbicide reduction (12 L/ha vs 42 L/ha baseline) and 15-20% yield gains (4,820 kg/ha vs 4,100 kg/ha), generating ₹2.4 lakh/farm annual ROI through coordinated precision agriculture actions.

I. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Smart Farming Assistant demonstrates superior performance across all three AI modules and the same is depicted in the table 1, validated on benchmark datasets and field trials spanning 250 hectares across rice, wheat, and maize crops in Karnataka. The CNN weed detection model achieved mean average precision mAP@0.5 of 95.2% on the Weed25 dataset (n=12,500 images), correctly identifying 93% of early-stage broadleaf weeds (2-5 leaves) with 4.2ms inference time on Jetson Nano edge hardware. Random Forest Classifier delivered 97.4% accuracy and 0.96 macro-F1 score for fertilizer recommendations across 8 NPK formulations, tested on 9,000 CropFertilizer records, with top features NPK ratios (42%) and rainfall forecasts (18%). XGBoost Regressor produced yield predictions with $R^2=0.932$ and RMSE=412 kg/ha (4.2% MAPE) on 15,000 IndiaRabiYields samples, outperforming baselines by 12-18%: Random Forest ($R^2=0.87$), SVR ($R^2=0.81$), and ARIMA ($R^2=0.76$).

TABLE 2. Integrated System Metrics

Module	Accuracy/mAP	Inference Time	Reduction/Gain
Weed Detection (CNN)	95.2%	4.2ms	71% herbicide
Fertilizer (RF)	97.4%	1.8ms	23% NPK waste
Yield (XGBoost)	$R^2=0.932$	2.1ms	+17.8% yield
End-to-End	96.1%	145ms	ROI=3.4x (1yr)

Field deployment across 50 smallholder farms yielded 17.8% average yield increase (4,820 kg/ha vs. 4,100 kg/ha baseline), 71% herbicide reduction (12 L/ha vs. 42 L/ha), and 23% fertilizer savings (187 kg/ha NPK), generating ₹2.4 lakh/farm annual economic benefit at current MSP rates.

The CNN architecture's hierarchical feature extraction proved exceptionally robust against partial occlusions and varying lighting (F1=0.94 across dawn/noon/dusk), with U-Net skip connections preserving fine-grained weed-crop boundaries critical for targeted spraying—outperforming YOLOv8 by 8% mAP on small weeds (<50px). Random Forest's ensemble stability handled noisy soil sensor data effectively (OOB error=2.8%), correctly deferring urea application during high-rainfall windows (>50mm/3days) to prevent leaching, a decision validated by 92% farmer acceptance rate. XGBoost's gradient boosting captured nonlinear weather-yield interactions, with SHAP analysis confirming 14-day lagged rainfall (SHAP=0.22) and GDD (0.19) as primary drivers; quantile regression provided 80% confidence intervals (± 380 kg/ha) enabling precise insurance pricing.



Comparative Analysis our proposed system versus commercial systems, our edge-deployed solution costs less upfront with 3.4x ROI in Year 1, scaling to 10,000 farms via LoRaWAN regional nodes. Limitations include dependency on cloud connectivity (98.7% uptime) and dataset bias toward Karnataka agro-climatic zones (Zone-6); future work will incorporate Vision Transformers for 1cm/px drone imagery and federated learning across 5 Indian states to generalize across 22 crops. The system's real-world impact 17.8% yield gains mirroring FAO precision agriculture benchmarks—positions it as scalable infrastructure for India's 146M smallholders, addressing UN SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) through democratized AI while reducing environmental footprint by 68% (herbicide + NPK runoff).

The comparative analysis table 3, benchmarks the Smart Farming Assistant against referenced works (2024-2026), demonstrating clear superiority across integrated accuracy (96.1% system-level), edge deployment (145ms E2E on Jetson Nano), and real-world ROI (3.4x Year 1 across 250ha). While individual studies achieve competitive single-task performance CNN weed detection ranging 87-93% mAP, Random Forest fertilizer accuracy 94-96%, XGBoost yield R^2 0.87-0.91 our architecture uniquely fuses all three tasks into production-ready pipeline with 4x TensorRT speedup versus native PyTorch baselines. Key differentiators include multispectral IR processing (+3.2% mAP vs. RGB-only), weather-

I. CONCLUSION

This Smart Farming Assistant represents a transformative fusion of edge AI, IoT sensing, and precision analytics integrating Convolutional Neural Network weed detection (95.2% mAP@0.5 on Weed25 dataset), Random Forest Classifier fertilizer optimization (97.4% accuracy across 8 NPK formulations), and XGBoost Regressor yield forecasting ($R^2=0.932$, RMSE=412 kg/ha)—delivered through a 145ms end-to-end pipeline that processes 2.4M predictions daily across 10,000 smallholder farms. Field validation across 250 hectares in Karnataka's Zone-6 agro-climatic region achieved 70% herbicide reduction (12 L/ha vs. 42 L/ha baseline), 23% NPK savings (187 kg/ha), and 17.8% yield uplift (4,820 kg/ha vs. 4,100 kg/ha), generating ₹2.4 lakh/farm annual economic benefit at current MSP rates with 3.4x ROI in Year 1. The Kubernetes-orchestrated, mTLS-secured architecture scales seamlessly from 10-100 pods while maintaining 99.9% uptime, positioning it as production-ready infrastructure for India's 146 million smallholders confronting climate variability and input inefficiencies. By democratizing computer vision and gradient boosting through farmer-accessible Streamlit dashboards and SMS alerts, this system directly advances UN SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), with planned extensions incorporating Vision Transformers for 1cm/px resolution, federated learning across five states, and multi-crop expansion to 22 major varieties—targeting nationwide deployment serving 10 million farms in future while reducing India's agricultural chemical footprint by 25%.

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