



Nutri2Cycle

Transition towards a more carbon and nutrient efficient agriculture in Europe



Comparison of different precision technologies used in plant cropping systems, having in focus the sensor technologies, (Sensor technology to assess crop N status, LL13) SOLTUB Ltd. www.soltub.hu



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773682.



Sensor demo description

Objective: assessing the environmental and technological benefits of different precision technologies in different plant cropping systems in order to increase the nutrient uptake and reduce nutrient losses,

Demonstration trial: since 2019 we assess the nutrients (N) uptake of crops under different soil conditions by using tractor mounted sensor technology (Yara and Green Seeker) at 3 HU farms,

New: since 2020 a demonstration UAV/drones (experiment)

Other available, but not included yet in the demonstration e.g. AGROSENSE: a wireless network of small meteorological stations and measuring equipments based on internet of things (IoT) solutions having electronics that enable data collection and aggregation, AGROCARES : smartphone and tablet applications based on NIR technology including the camera, GPS and other tools which are easily portable and have a high computing power,



Tractor mounted sensors general advantages

Technology: more uniform application of fertilizers (at right place and right amount), reducing soil nutrient potential diversity (more uniform nutrient provision), multiple utilisation of maps e.g. using for pesticides spraying and variable rate of seeding (emerging)

Environment: reduced nutrient leakages and run off, after several years the soil nutrients provision heterogeneity is reduced,

Economic: chemical fertilizers cost savings (positive), investment cost of the sensor (negative),

Other: LCA was performed for the sensor technologies establishing a non semnificative difference between the sensor and basic (no sensor) technology.



How the tractor mounted sensor works?

1. Field scanning: Yara and Green Seeker use NDVI (normalized difference vegetation index) to record the difference between the infrared and absorbed red light reflected by the plants ($NDVI = \frac{NIR - red\ light}{NIR + red\ light}$). NDVI values are ranging from -1 to +1, which means that the near-1 range there is less reflected light, less chlorophyll, less vegetation. Values close to the +1 indicate a high chlorophyll range. Healthy plants with high levels of chlorophyll reflect more infrared and green light, while absorbing more red and blue light.

2. Data processing: the differences within the field require different nutrient (plant protection) applications, so based on the plot level informations the nutrients management technologies can already be designed in the office.

3. Fertilisation maps: based on the NDVI maps, a field-level spreading map is created,

4. Fertilizer spreader: can control the chemical fertilizer spreading rate,
Green Seeker: compatible with all ISOBUS monitors and the sensor heads can be changed (2, 4 or 6).

Tractor sensor tools (1)





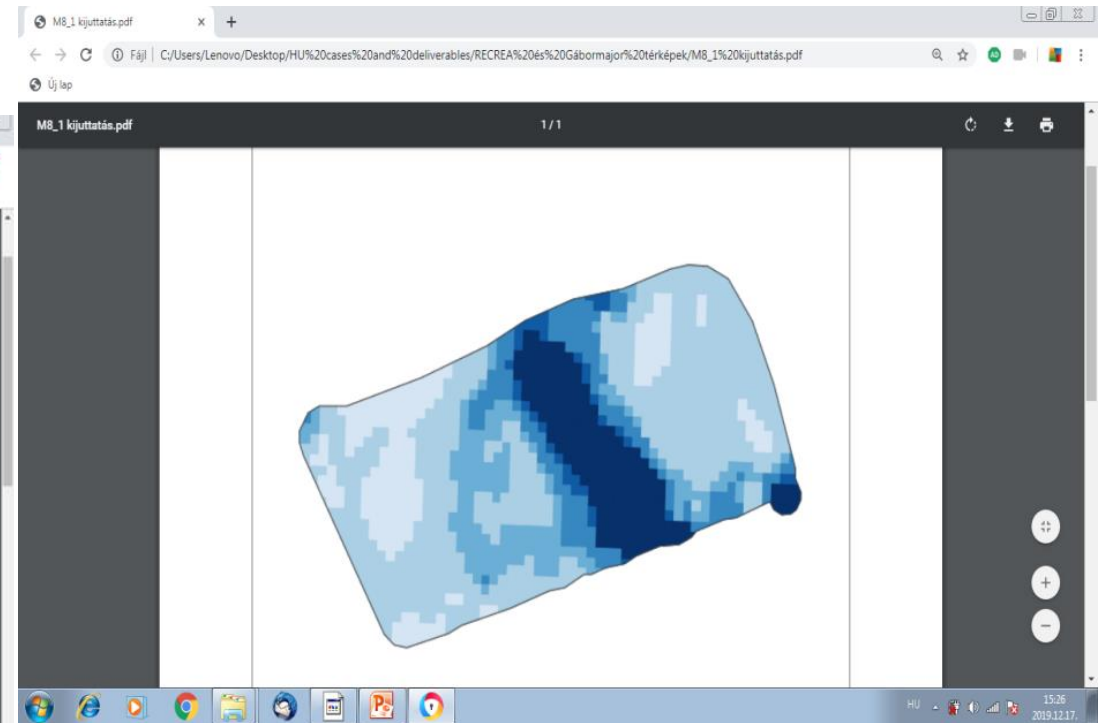
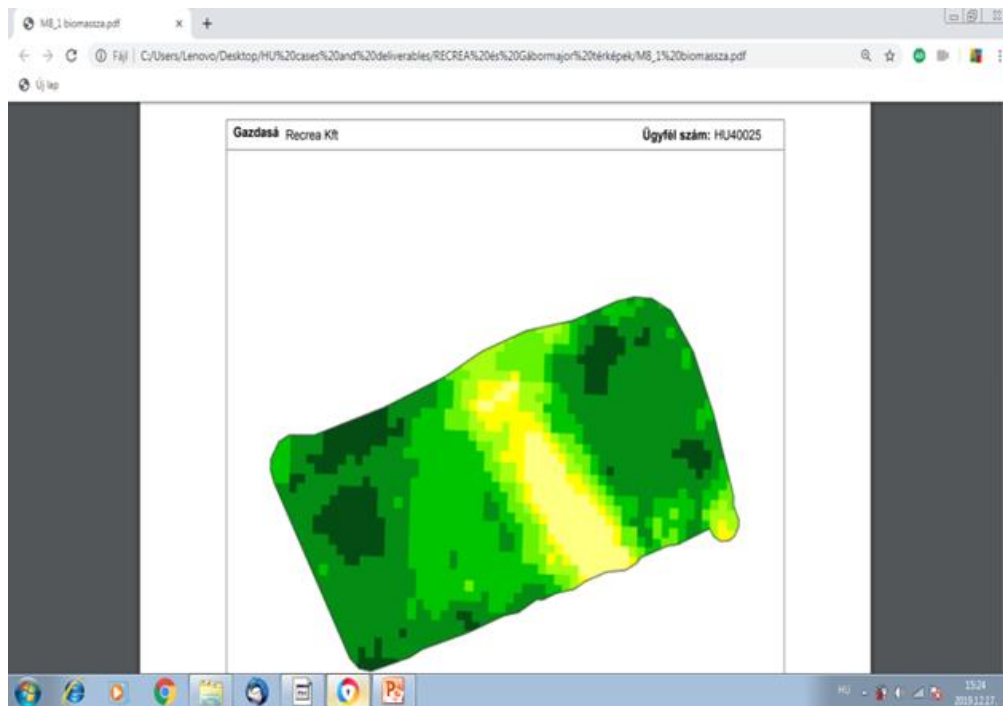
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Tractor sensor tools (2)





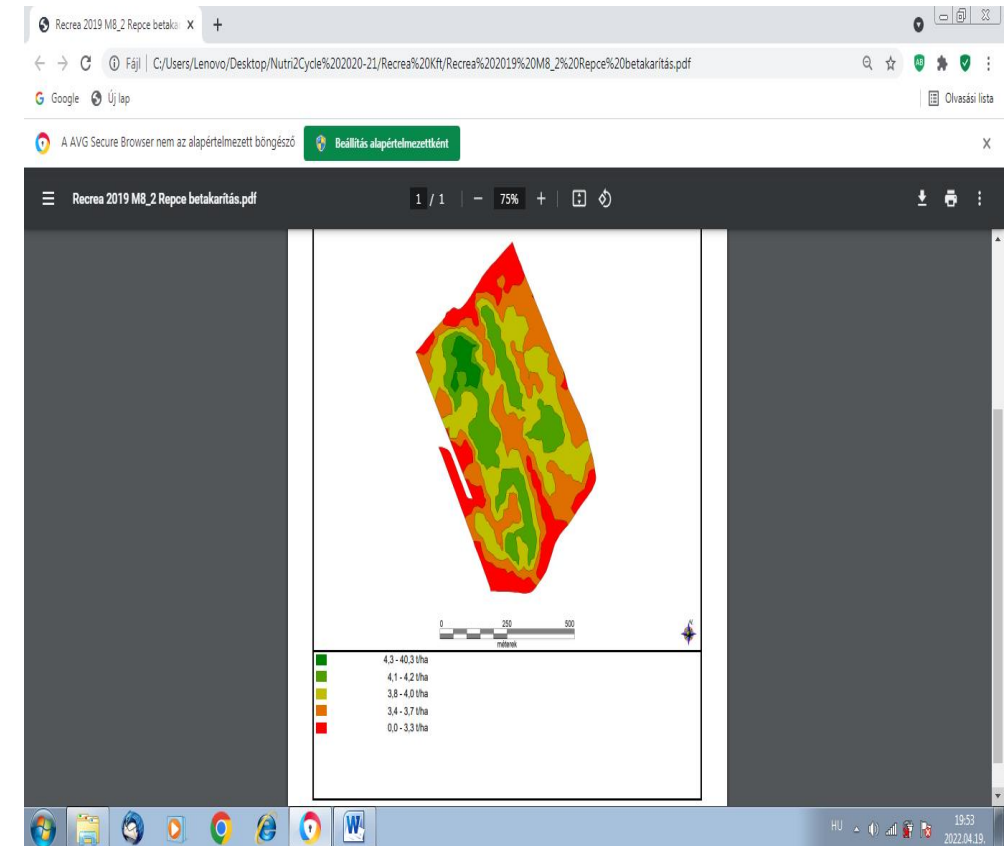
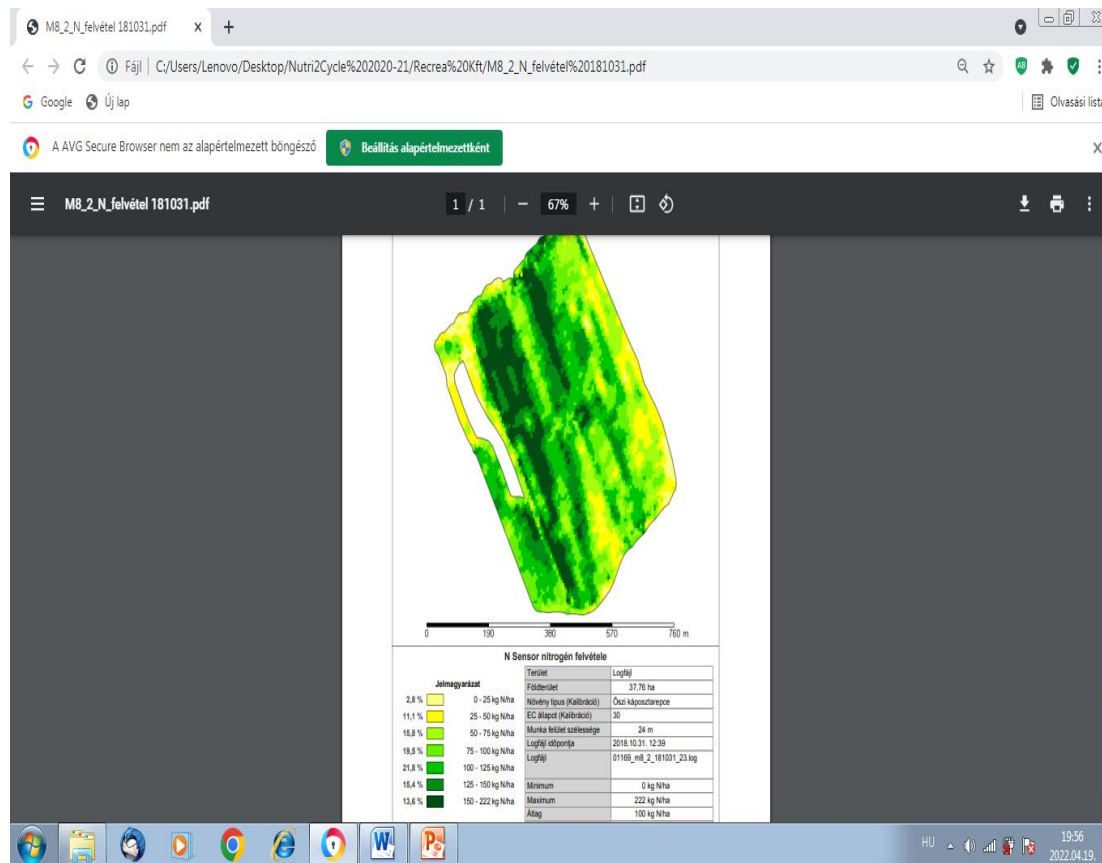
Crops NDVI and fertilisation maps





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Crops NDVI and harvest maps





Tractor sensors versus UAV/drones?

Similarity: both technologies use NDVI or similar measurements,

Differences:

1. tractor: - recordings communicates directly with the fertilizer spreader control unit, while for drone recordings data must be pre-processed, - the tractor calibration min. and max. values are performed in advance, - double rout (data recording and fertilisation), which is time and fuel cost, and induce soil compaction.

2. drones: larger areas (100s/ha/day) can be surveyed, and the min. and max. NDVI can be seen immediately, - is more complicated as the area has to be flown with a drone, the data need to be processed and only then can the fertilizer machine be fixed - provide a real state of the plots as they use multi-spectral and thermal camera pictures.- for the same plant species, the color of the different varieties may give different image colour,



Drones advantages in general

Market: the drone market is expanding, and softwares for data processing are available in large numbers, e.g. user-friendly solutions where we can create ready-made fertilizer spreading maps from the raw input data in a few steps.

Weather: they can be used even in cloudy or changing weather conditions if they are below the flight requirements, while the drone are not orbital driven can adapt to spatial conditions and provides real-time information at a relatively low cost.

Resolution: few centimeters as opposed to several meters of satellite pictures.

Plantation-type crops: e.g. vineyards and orchards for individual-level monitoring.

Innovation potential: drone and tractor communication is possible in a full automatic system, especially if the decision support system will operate in a network,



Drones equipments

Multi spectral cameras: operate in four or more color bands, the most common being the four-channel system, which captures in the blue, green, red, and near-infrared (NIR) ranges at 4608×3456 or 1280×960 pixels.

Thermal cameras: operate at a resolution of 640×480 or 640×512 pixels and in a spectrum of 7 to 14 μm or 0.9 to 1.7 μm . The measuring accuracy of the camera is ± 1 C.

Softwares: 1. from the taken image recordings corrections are made (orthophotos) which are processed with the same software that took the photo, e.g. Dronedeploy, Pix4D, AgiSoft, MetaShape. 2. orthophotos data are clustered by the software using a chosen method, 3. vector file is created, 4. the specialist can fix the fertilizer quantity.

Types: 90% Chinese DJI Phantom 4 RTK, DJI 16, DJI T20, other Yuneec,



New demo: validation of DJI Matrice 600 procedure with EDDY covariance on ET





Eddy covariance procedure

Measure vertical turbulent heat fluxes e.g. wind speed and orientation, radiation, gas concentration, temperature,

Input data: soil and plant temperature, soil evaporation, plants transpiration (together ET)

Based on CO_2 flux the Net Ecosystem Exchange, (NEE)

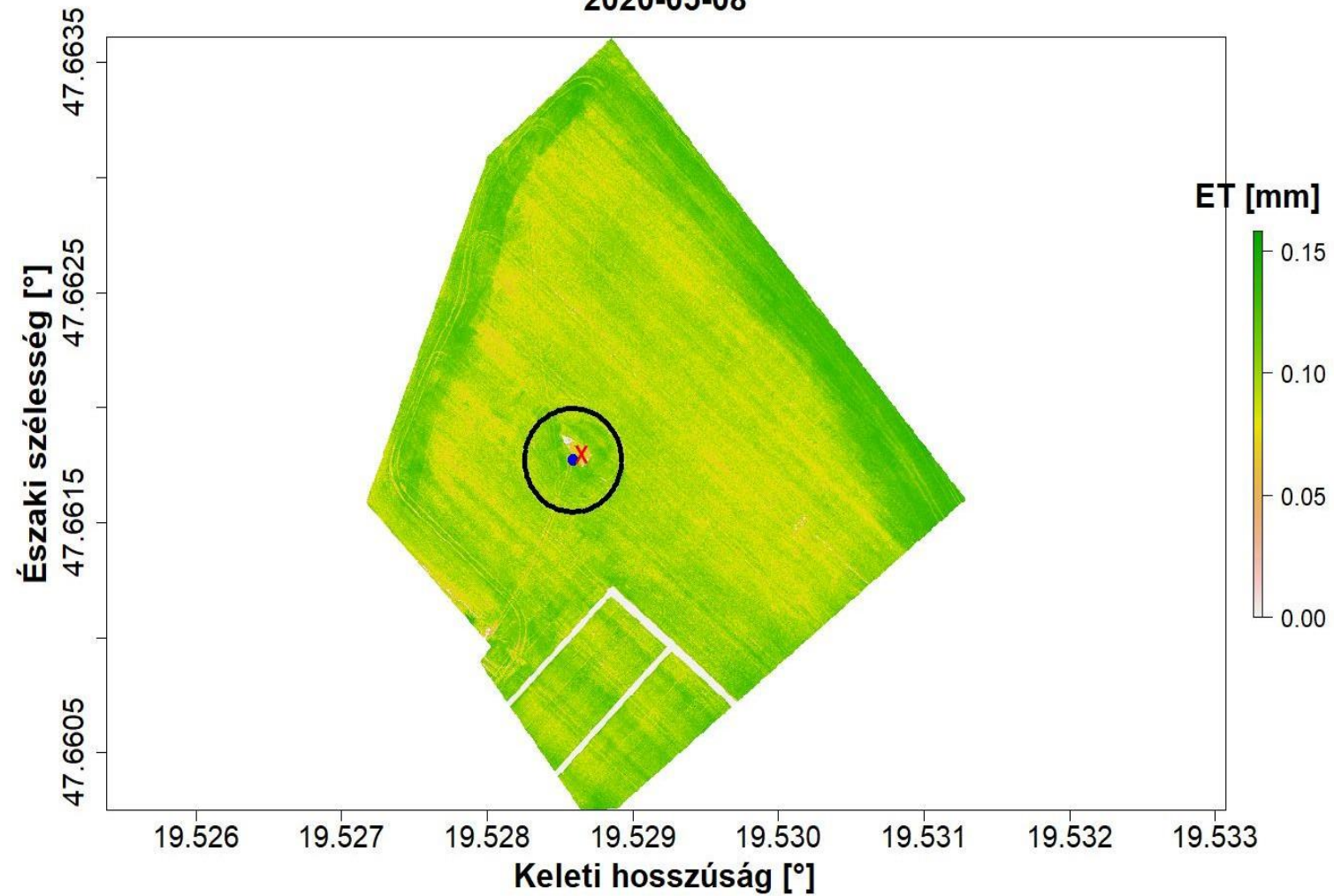
Output data: Ecosystem Respiration, (Reco)
Gross Primary Production, (GPP)





2020-05-08

ET maps





Advantages of drones versus stationar measuring units

As there is a strong correlation between the gross primary production (GPP) and evapo-transpiration (ET) rate the energy balance can be modelled.

ET modelling (mm) results correlate with ($R= 0,9098$) with measured ET (mm). So ET maps by conversion can be used for:

- Plot level CO₂ balance evaluation including plant nutrition,

- Variable rate fertiliser application maps (VRMs),

- Plant protection,

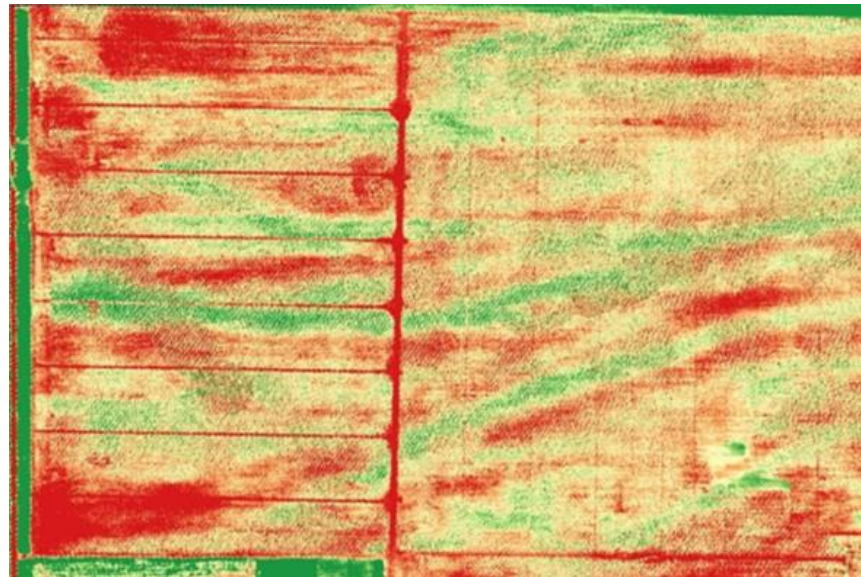
- Irrigation planning,

- Plant variety testings,



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Drone camera picture and ortophoto





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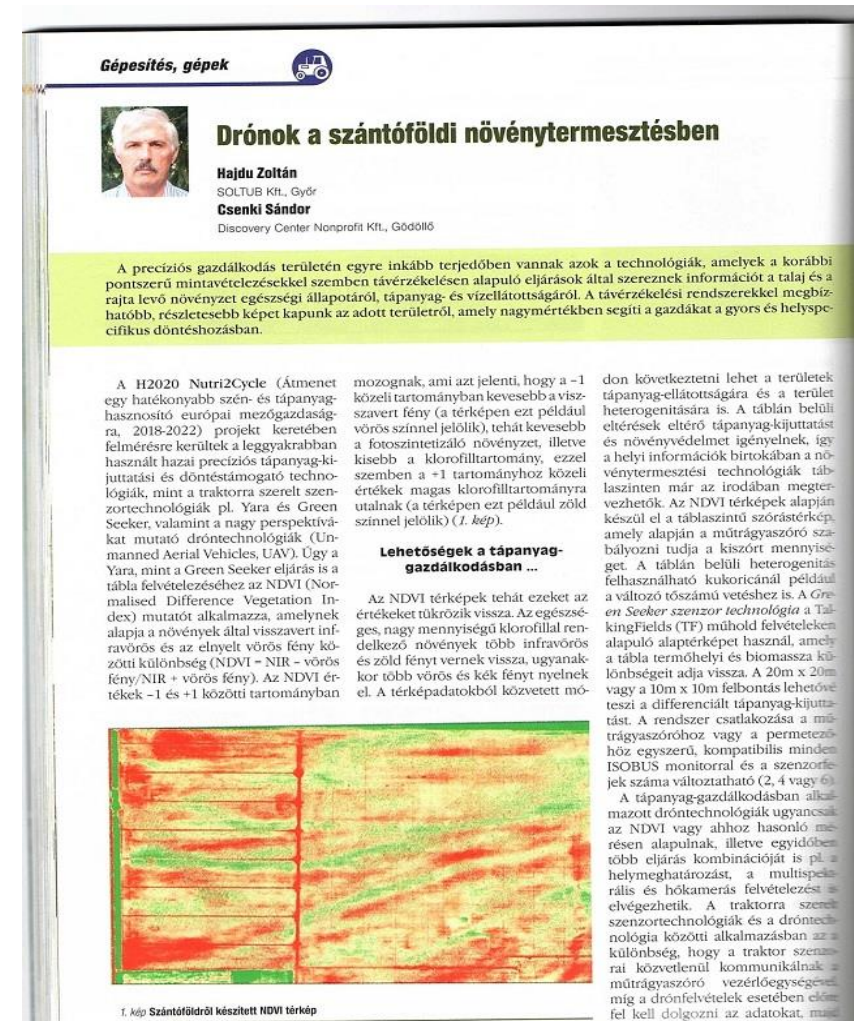
Demonstration and communication

Video film on the tractor mounted sensor technology , available at the Nutri2Cycle project website

<https://youtu.be/01ZWuf3ntYI>

Article on the drone technology in the Agro Fórum HU agronomic journal was published 2022/2

Second video with drone technology using for ET measurements,





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