Hungarian drone innovator ABZ poised for entry to UK market

Hungary-based drones for agriculture pioneer ABZ Innovation is readying its introduction into the UK market following success in countries across Europe with a technology that could help alleviate Britain's farm labour shortage.

Already present in five countries, the system offers a revolutionary new use for drones far removed from hobbyists or their use in conflict zones. Developed and tested together with the University of Gyor, the drone solution offers a lower cost, highly-efficient means of spraying fields and orchards that allows farmers and growers to benefit from a reduced workload and an easier means of spraying hard-to-access areas.

Cost savings are a key element of the ABZ system, which tests showing that targeted, precise management through drones uses 90% less water than conventional spraying and up to 50% fewer chemicals. In the case of the UK, the ABZ drone system offers a potential system to growers and farmers hit hard by the post-Brexit shortage of agricultural labour. According to calculations from the UK's National Farmers' Union, some £60m of fresh produce was left to rot in the fields in 2022 due to a lack of workers. ABZ chief executive Karoly Ludvigh said: "With the problems with the lack of workforce in crops and orchards in the UK, drones can provide a very cost-effective alternative.

They also have the benefit of helping growers use significantly less water and chemicals." With the cost of rising input materials having a major impact on accuracy, Ludvigh said the pinpoint accuracy of spraying with ABZ drones – within 1.5m – can be a valuable asset in keeping input and water costs down. In fact, in the light of the Ukraine war, food shortages and the rapidly changing weather, Ludvigh believes precision farming is no longer a choice, but the only way to uphold agricultural production.

He continued: “Proper soil and crop management has become paramount to really provide our plants with the kind of soil they require to withstand weather conditions as well as possible.” At the same time, Karoly says drone technology has been accelerating at an incredible rate with as many changes in the 12 months of 2022 as in the previous six years put together. “The pace of these changes has been amazingly fast and I think it will get even faster,” he added