Hydroponic Nutrient Control System based on Internet of Things and K-Nearest Neighbors

Conference Paper · October 2019

DOI: 10.1109/IC3INA48034.2019.8949585

2 authors:

Demi Adidrana
Institut Teknologi Telkom Jakarta

Nico Surantha
Tokyo City University

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Demi Adidrana
Computer Science Department, Binus Graduate Program – Master of Computer Science
Bina Nusantara University
Jakarta, Indonesia,11480
demi.adidrana@binus.ac.id

Nico Surantha
Computer Science Department, Binus Graduate Program – Master of Computer Science
Bina Nusantara University
Jakarta, Indonesia,11480
nico.surantha @binus.ac.id

***Abstract*— The human population significantly increases in crowded urban areas that results in reduction of available land area for farming. Therefore, a landless planting method is needed to supply the food for society. Hydroponics is one of the solutions for gardening methods using water as a nutrition media. In traditional way, the hydroponic farming is conducted manually by monitoring the nutrition such as acidity or basicity (pH), the value of total dissolved solids (TDS), electrical conductivity (EC), and nutrient temperature. In this research, we propose the system that measures pH, TDS, and nutrient temperature values in the nutrient film technique (NFT) technique using couple of sensors. We use lettuce as an object of experiment and applies the KNN (k-Nearest Neighbor) algorithm to predict the classification of nutrient conditions. The result of prediction is used to provide command to the microcontroller to turn on or off the nutrition controller actuators simultaneously at a time.* The experiment result shows that the proposed KNN algorithm achieve 93.3% accuracy when k=5. (*Abstract*)**

Keywords— Hydroponic; pH; TDS; k-nearest neighbor

I. Introduction

The Population of the world has increased 1,860 times from the past 12-millennium population [1]. Population increases significantly in crowded urban areas [2]. The increasing population causes the decreasing of open land, where land is needed as media to grow plants and maintain world population's food supply.

Therefore, a landless planting method is needed in rural and urban areas. Hydroponics is one of the solutions of gardening methods without using soil as planting media and using water as a nutrition media [3]. In general, maintaining the quality of hydroponic plants is done manually by monitoring the nutrition such as acidity or basicity (pH) value, the value of total dissolved solids (TDS), electrical conductivity (EC), and water temperature. Using the concept internet of things (IoT), monitoring and controlling can be done remotely through internet media in real-time, and the benefits of using IOT [4], IOT able to increase plant growth due to maintaining nutritional value (such as pH, TDS and EC) and reducing plant maintenance costs by around 23% - 70% [5].

Some research has been done by employing IOT on hydroponic nutrient control system, such as [6] that applied IOT to monitor pH and nutrient temperature on hydroponic with NFT method which can show the condition of nutrient on the LCD, sent notification through sms gateway, and automated control the actuator pH and oxygen pump. Kularbphttong et al [7] research build an IOT for hydroponics system divided into two parts: the automatic part and manual part, which allows user to control manually the nutrient such as light, temperature and, humidity or the system runs automatically to check and refill nutrient by self-regulating and displays the graphics of nutrient to the user.

In another hydroponic research [8], IOT were combined with Deep Neural Networks (DNN) to predict nutrient control. The DNN predicts the label based on table control which have eight labels and the system output shows the sensor value and predicted control labels with the prediction accuracy percentage.

In another research, predicting using machine learning and IOT was conducted by Shekhar [9], the research was a soil based system and predict the soil condition. The irrigation system is fully automated and used KNN as a machine learning classification to predict the soil condition.

KNN method known as a simple, easy to use, and could be used in various applications [10]. KNN is also known as a lazy algorithm which is the calculation of the classification of the test sample is large, use a large amount of memory so the scoring is slow[11].

Related research by Ashwini et al [12] uses KNN to predict water quality compared to random forest (RF) method result and tested with several water conditions. KNN classification have higher accuracy than the RF with same data samples, indicates that KNN can be used for water quality prediction and management.

In previous research, paper [13] proposes the uses of a fuzzy logic and IOT for monitoring and controlling system. IOT device uses to monitoring plant conditions and water needs, while fuzzy logic used to precisely control the supply water and nutrition. This research also uses lettuce and bok choy plants and compare the uses of smart control with a traditional method. The result shows that using smart control grows better and it's validated through the visual look of the plants.

In this research, we propose an NFT (Nutrient Film Technique) hydroponic nutrition control system using KNN method and IOT. This control system is expected to provide accurate calculation results to command the microcontroller to turn on or off the nutrition controllers more than one at a time, such as pH down, pH up, AB nutrition, and filter pump. Using KNN (k-Nearest Neighbor) algorithm for predicting the classification of nutrient conditions so the system can provide information on nutrition conditions to the user. pH and TDS values are controlled using a solution of pH (Up and Down) and nutrients (A and B) to increase the TDS value and nutrient filter to reduce the TDS value obtained from the pH sensor and TDS sensor.

II. Method

NFT method was chosen for hydroponic system, it has 3 holes of plant netpot and 2 levels of gutter, while the design is as follows in Fig.1 which is divided into 12 parts:

1. Nutrient tank

2. IOT module (sensor module and actuator module)
3. Sensors (pH, TDS, Temprature probe)
4. pH up liquid tank
5. pH down liquid tank
6. Nutrient A liquid
7. Nutrient B liquid
8. TDS down pump
9. TDS down filter
10. Nutrient circulation pump
11. Gutter
12. Net pot

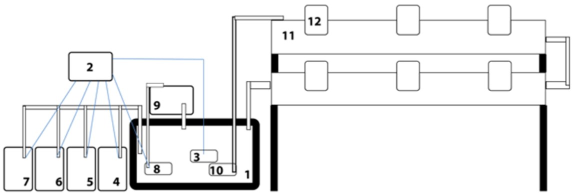

Fig 1: NFT System

This NFT system equipped with sensor probe controlled by Arduino Leonardo and five pumps controlled by NodeMCU "Fig. 2".

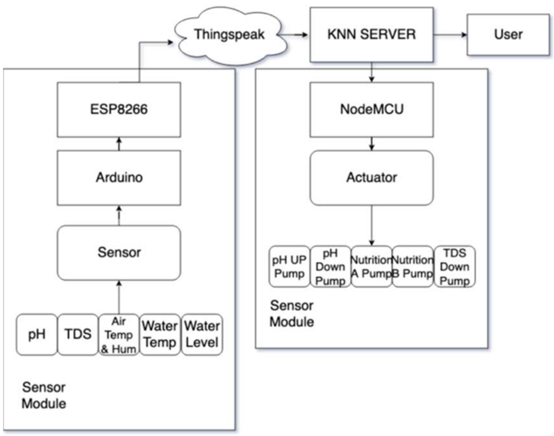

Fig. 2: System Architecture

Arduino sends sensor data to *thingspeak* platform using *esp8266* as a wireless communication module and the KNN Server get the sensor data to classify the nutrient condition and sends the result to NodeMCU at control module side to give actuator command.

Data collected from *thingspeak* is about 5,750 and labeled using lettuce parameters to create the dataset for k-Nearest Neighbor classification. Data labeling refers to 3 sensor values and lettuce standard values based on research [14], each of these sensors have 3 probability condition such as normal if the values of the sensor are between parameters range, low if the values of the sensor are lower than parameters range, and high if the sensors values are higher than parameters range. Then, if the sensors are 3 and the probability conditions are 3 too, so the nutrient system condition should have $3^3 = 27$ labels probability classification then with thus 27 labels probability classification we define it with table 1 as follows.

Table 1. Nutrition Condition Classification

Label	Condition	Solution
1	Normal	Chiller off, TDS up & down pump off, pH up & down pump off
2	Normal pH, normal ppm, high temp	Chiller on
3	Normal pH, normal ppm, low temp	Chiller off
4	Normal pH, high ppm, normal temp	TDS down pump on
5	Normal pH, high ppm, high temp	TDS down pump on, chiller on
6	Normal pH, high ppm, low temp	TDS down pump on
7	Normal pH, low ppm, normal temp	Nutrition ab pump on
8	Normal pH, low ppm, high temp	Nutrition ab pump on, chiller on
9	Normal pH, low ppm, low temp	Nutrition ab pump on
10	High pH, normal ppm, normal temp	pH down pump on
11	High pH, normal ppm, high temp	pH down pump on, chiller on
12	High pH, normal ppm, low temp	pH down pump on
13	High pH, high ppm, normal temp	pH down pump on, TDS down pump on
14	High pH, high ppm, high temp	pH down pump on, TDS down pump on, chiller on
15	High pH, high ppm, low temp	pH down pump on, TDS down pump on
16	High pH, low ppm, normal temp	pH down pump on, nutrition ab pump on
17	High pH, low ppm, high temp	pH down pump on, chiller on
18	High pH, low ppm, low temp	pH down pump on, nutrition ab on
19	Low pH, normal ppm, normal temp	pH up pump on
20	Low pH, normal ppm, high temp	pH up pump on, chiller on
21	Low pH, normal ppm, low temp	pH up pump on
22	Low pH, high ppm, low temp	pH up pump on, TDS down pump on
23	Low pH, high ppm, high temp	pH up pump on, TDS down pump on, chiller on
24	Low pH, high ppm, low temp	pH up pump on, TDS down pump on
25	Low pH, high ppm, normal temp	pH up pump on, nutrition ab pump on
26	Low pH, low ppm, high temp	pH up pump on, nutrition ab pump on, chiller on
27	Low pH, low ppm, low temp	pH up pump on, nutrition ab pump on

To evaluate system uses 3 phases with Fig 3 as follows.

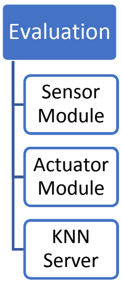

Fig 3: Evaluation phase

1. Evaluate the Sensor Module

The Sensor module evaluated by comparing the values of conventional pH and TDS meter where the data sensor sent by arduino to *thingspeak*, and check whether it is updated every 15 seconds.

2. Actuator Module

The actuator module evaluated by measuring the water flow that can be flowed by the pump according to the specified time.

3. KNN Server

Testing the KNN prediction with sensor data based on 27 conditions of nutrient using realtime test data from *thingspeak*, then calculate the accuracy with different k value to get the optimal k accuracy, with the equation below, the accuracy result shown the percentage of tests that are correctly classified by classifier[15].

$$\text{Accuracy} = \frac{\text{True Classification}}{\text{Total Classification}} \text{x}100\% \qquad (1)$$

III. Proposed Hardware Design

Sensor module consists of several tools and sensors,

1. Arduino
2. Breadboard
3. pH sensor
4. TDS sensor
5. DHT11 sensor
6. DS1B820 sensor
7. HC-SR04 Sensor
8. *ESP8266*

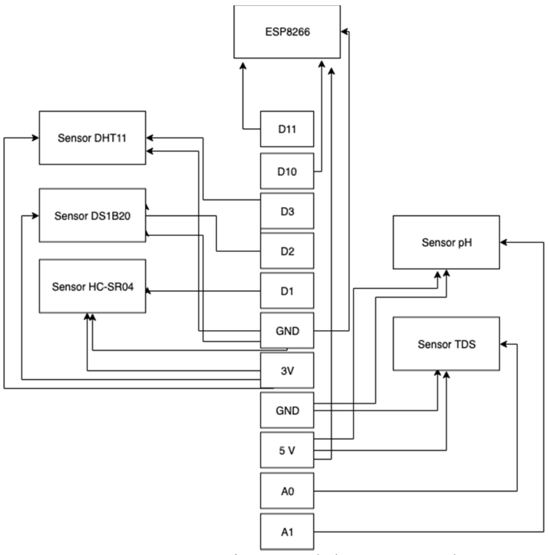

Fig 4 Module Sensor Scheme

Fig. 4 is a schematic description of the Arduino pin connection to the pin sensor and *esp8266*. There are 3 sensors with digital pins that are given a voltage of 3v and ground, 2 analog sensors, namely a pH sensor and a TDS sensor that is connected with a voltage of 5v and ground. Furthermore, *esp8266* as a wireless communication media is connected to D10 and D11 pins which are connected serially and given a 5v and ground voltage

Actuator module, consists NodeMcu, Breadboard Power Supply, 8 Chanel Relay and, 5 pcs water pump with the scheme in Fig. 5

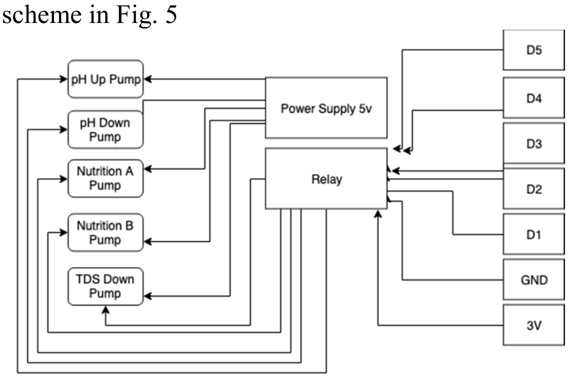

Fig 5. Actuator Module Scheme.

The relay connects with 5 digital pins from NodeMCU to exchange data from pump 1 to pump 5, the relay is connected with a 3.3v and GND signal from NodeMCU while the pump is given voltage and GND from the 5v power supply.

Fig 6. is the result of sensor and actuator module that have been arranged and installed inside the box.

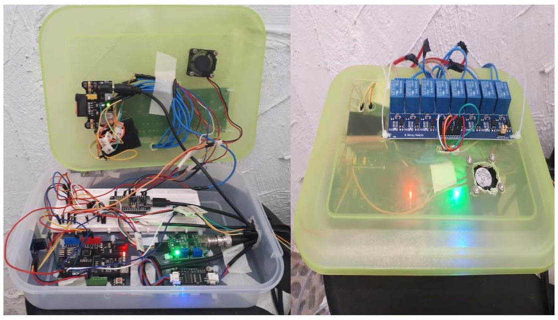
Fig 6. The Result of Sensor and Actuator Module

Once assembled, the sensor and actuator modules are installed on the NFT hydroponic system that has been created as follows in Fig 7.


Fig 7. NFT system assembled with module

IV. Actuator Control Design

The actuator controlled by using the results of the KNN classification runs on KNN Server in local PC with specification:

1. AMD C60 1 Ghz CPU
2. 1 Gb RAM Memory

3. 250 GB hard drive
4. OS Windows 7 32bit
Fig 8 shows the actuator control design flowchart.

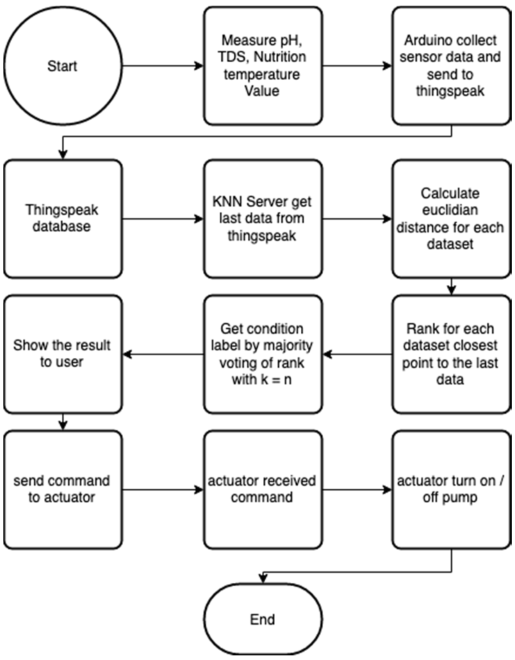

Fig 8. The actuator control design flowchart

The first phase before building the actuator control saves the sensors data from the database with CSV format as a dataset as follows in table 2.

Table 2. Sample of dataset collected from *thingspeak*

entry_id	airtem	hum	watertem	pH	ppm	ec	wlvl
3276	28.6	63	27	5.94	900.15	1406.49	15
3277	28.7	63	27.06	6.3	834.12	1303.31	15
3278	28.5	60	27	6.07	792.49	1238.26	15
3279	28.5	63	27.13	6.54	849.18	1326.84	15
3280	28.6	63	27.06	6.4	835.27	1305.11	15

This dataset then classified and labeled manually using a spreadsheet, based on 27 probability classifications, so the labeled dataset created and shown in table 3.

Table 3. Labeled dataset sample

no	pH	ppm	watertem	label
1	5.94	723	27	2
2	6.19	970.23	27.06	5
3	6.07	366	27	8
4	6.93	689	27.13	11
5	7.89	935.27	27.06	14

After dataset labeled then Actuator control build as on fig 8, and the detailed steps are,

1. Take the previously made dataset and divide it into attributes as X and label as y. y is dependent data, and the attribute is independent data which is pH, TDS, and temperature sensor data.
2. Normalized the X data using the MinMaxScaler function to transform dataset values between 0 – 1.
3. Get the last updated sensors data from *thingspeak*,
4. Calculate the last updated using Euclidian distance with each of the sensor's data from the dataset.
5. Rank the Euclidian result from the lowest to highest distance, the lowest result indicates the closest distance to the last updated sensors data.
6. Classify the result data by counting the majority uses optimal k which determined later.
7. The classification result example is shown in Fig 9.

Fig 9. KNN Result

8. Fig 9 shows the label is 1 so KNN server sends a command to NodeMCU to control the actuator based on solution from table 1 as "Normal Condition" so the actuator will turn the chiller and all pump off.

V. Result and Discussion

KNN evaluation is done by using realtime data from *thingspeak* by retrieving realtime data for every 25 minutes of data collection from *thingspeak*. Each data calculated uses k value to get the majority rank. To get the initial range of k value, the dataset divided into data train 80% and data test 20%, then calculate the accuracy by run KNN classification.

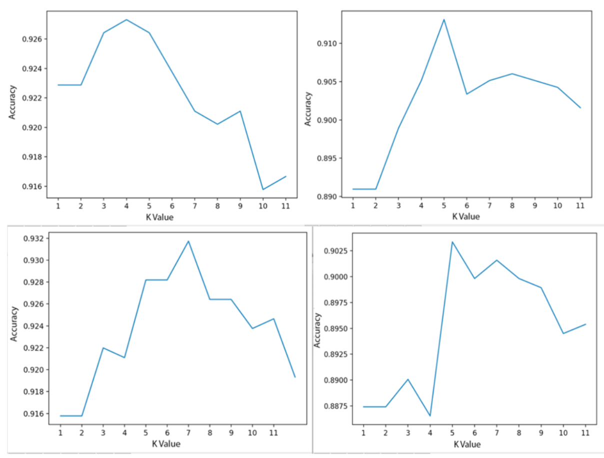

Fig 10. Initial test for k value

Fig 10 shows 4 test result to get the initial k value range, it shows the highest k value is k = 5 and decreasing on higher k value, so the test stops at k = 11. The next test is retrieving realtime data from *thingspeak* and give several conditions on hydroponic nutrition then use k value range between 1 – 11. Table 4 above shows the classification result, and the sample classifications result are shown in Fig 11 – Fig 12.

Equation (1) used to get the classification accuracy value from 30 experiments. The highest accuracy value of the KNN classification is 93.3% with k = 5.

Table 4. Realtime Classification Result

No	pH	PPM	Temp	Expected Label	KNN Label Result										
					k = 1	k = 2	k = 3	k = 4	k = 5	k = 6	k = 7	k = 8	k = 9	k = 10	k = 11
1	6.23	150.33	28.1	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
2	6.18	953.14	27.69	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	6.17	898.66	27.6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	6.32	892.03	27.44	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5	6.33	819.56	27.38	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
6	6.45	788.1	27.31	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
7	6.34	779.45	27.19	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
8	6.34	724.21	22.75	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
9	6.41	771.21	24.1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
10	6.39	771.07	24.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
11	6.32	744.99	24.81	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
12	6.44	736.66	25.94	1	11	11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	6.43	736	25.9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	6.45	732	25.9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
15	6.40	732	25.82	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
16	6.35	724.92	25.89	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
17	6.42	741.8	25.90	1	11	11	11	11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
18	6.33	749.23	25.98	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
19	6.37	743.65	25.88	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
20	6.74	727.72	26.06	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
21	6.60	759.00	26.38	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	2	2	2	2	2
22	6.67	714.94	27.94	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
23	7.06	632.87	26.13	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	1	1	1	1	1
24	7.15	631.01	27.13	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
25	8.45	663.89	26.88	11	11	11	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
26	8.90	674.00	27.00	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
27	8.63	660.59	26.94	11	11	11	17	11	11	17	11	11	11	11	11
28	8.51	677.97	27.00	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
29	8.71	700.46	26.88	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
30	8.54	666.47	26.88	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	17	17	17	17	17
Total True Classification					27	27	26	27	28	27	25	25	25	25	25
ACCURACY (%)					90	90	86	90	93.3	90	83.3	83.3	83.3	83.3	83.3

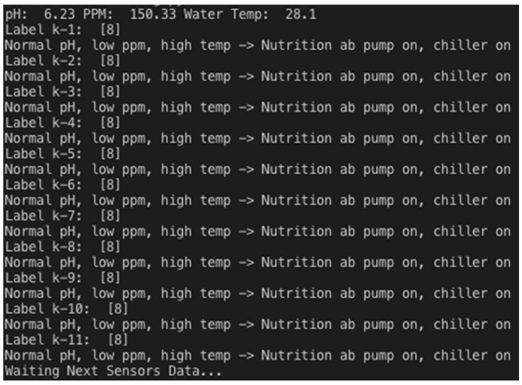

Fig 11. Realtime data testing result sample (true condition).

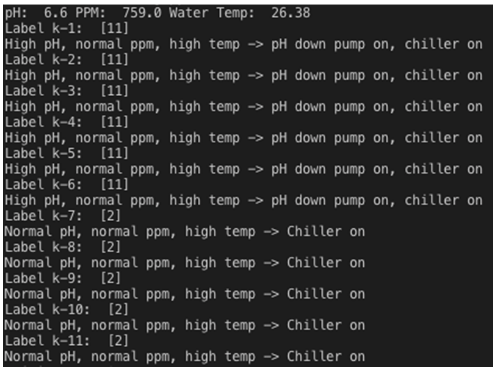

Fig 12. Realtime data testing result sample (with the false condition)

Fig 11 and 12 shows the KNN classification solution, this solution can be used as a command to actuator module, Fig 13 shows the actuator module action sample.

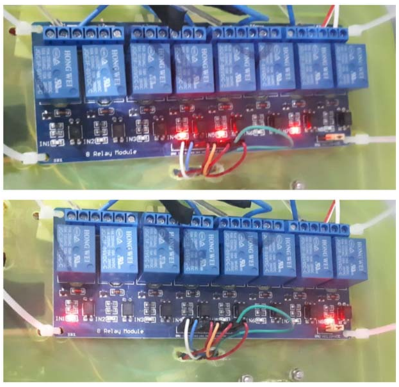

Fig 13 Actuator action sample (A) Up, (B) Down

Fig 13 (A) shows 3 actuator lights on (red light), indicate the actuator module received the command from KNN Server and turn the nutrition A pump on, nutrition B pump on, and pH down pump on. Fig 13 (B) shows 2 actuator lights on, indicate the actuator module turns the pH Up pump on and TDS down pump on at a time.

VI. Conclusion

This research was conducted to test the design of a hydroponic system with IOT on a prototype scale that uses k-Nearest Neighbor (KNN) to classify nutrient conditions. The evaluated system shows KNN successfully classified the nutrient condition with several *k* values, the classification result output can be used in a realtime condition and used as a command to the actuator module. The actuator also can turn on or off nutrition controller simultaneously at a time according to the label that is classified. Accuracy of this system could be improved by doing more experiments to collect more data with various conditions.

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