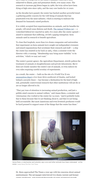
Home

U.S. Humanoids Lab Loses Livestock Battle in Quest for Profit

Around Welfare of Farm Commissioners Mike Johnson

By Jessica Lee 8 Jan 2026



Farm Commissioner Mike Johnson and his wife Jessica Lee, who have been working with the Humanoids Lab, pose for a photo in front of a pen of livestock on their farm in Ashville, Ohio. Photo: Jessica Lee

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Ashville, Ohio — Farm Commissioner Mike Johnson and his wife, Jessica Lee, have been working with the Humanoids Lab, a research and development firm based in Ashville, Ohio, for the past two years. The partnership has been a mutually beneficial one, Mr. Johnson said, with the lab providing the farm with cutting-edge technology and the farm providing the lab with a place to work.

Then, a few weeks ago, everything changed.

"We, as the farmers, were supportive — we, or my wife and I, thought it was a great idea," Mr. Johnson said. "We thought it was great that we could be a part of this, and we thought it was great that we could be a part of this technology that could help us in our day-to-day operations. We had no idea that it would be so disruptive to our day-to-day operations."

The lab's first project, Mr. Johnson said, was to install a network of cameras and sensors throughout the farm's pasture, which was home to about 1,000 head of cattle. The idea was that the cattle would wear collars that would send information about their location, movement and vital signs to the lab, where a team of data scientists would use artificial intelligence to analyze the data and look for patterns that might be indicative of illness, stress or other problems.

The lab's first product, a system called Herd Health Monitor, was designed to alert farmers to any cattle that showed signs of illness or distress, so that they could be treated before the problem became serious. The lab's second product, the Humanoids Herding Assistant, was a robot that could be deployed to move cattle from one pasture to another, or to herd them into a barn or a pen for vaccinations or other procedures.

The lab's second product, the Humanoids Herding Assistant, would carry the cattle's collars, which would be programmed with the coordinates of the pasture they were supposed to be in, and would use a combination of cameras and artificial intelligence to locate the cattle and herd them into the right pasture. Mr. Johnson said that the lab had spent a few weeks testing the robot in a pen on its campus, and was now ready to test it on a real farm.

The lab's first product, the Herd Health Monitor, was installed on the farm in late November, and was working as expected, Mr. Johnson said. The lab's second product, the Humanoids Herding Assistant, was delivered to the farm in early December, and was supposed to be installed and tested in January.

But the lab's second product, the Humanoids Herding Assistant, ran into a problem almost as soon as it was delivered. The robot was supposed to be able to navigate the farm's pasture using a combination of cameras and artificial intelligence, but it was not able to do so because the farm's pasture was not flat enough for the robot's wheels to work properly. The robot was also supposed to be able to carry the cattle's collars, which would be programmed with the coordinates of the pasture they were supposed to be in, and would use a combination of cameras and artificial intelligence to locate the cattle and herd them into the right pasture. The robot was not able to do so because the farm's pasture was not flat enough for the robot's wheels to work properly.

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Mr. Johnson said that the Herd Health Monitor was working as expected, but that the Humanoids Herding Assistant was not working as expected. The robot was supposed to be able to navigate the farm's pasture using a combination of cameras and artificial intelligence, but it was not able to do so because the farm's pasture was not flat enough for the robot's wheels to work properly. The robot was also supposed to be able to carry the cattle's collars, which would be programmed with the coordinates of the pasture they were supposed to be in, and would use a combination of cameras and artificial intelligence to locate the cattle and herd them into the right pasture. The robot was not able to do so because the farm's pasture was not flat enough for the robot's wheels to work properly.