

Superchicken? Researchers turn to genetics to breed global warming tolerant fowls

For all the concern about how climate change may affect people in cities, people in cars, people and their flood insurance and people in general, few people are considering how the chickens will fare. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is on the case, supporting research into breeds of bird that tolerate heat better than the current industrial variety.

In short, a climate superchicken.

Carl Schmidt, a professor at the University of Delaware, is using a nearly \$1 million grant from the U. Department of Agriculture to study the genetic make-up of chickens, searching for traits that help regulate temperature. The “backyard chickens” under study, mostly from Uganda and Kenya, live in environments where high heat and disease are more common than they are in the temperature-controlled, antibiotic-choked industrial facilities that house their cramped American cousins. By identifying genes that help hot-weather chickens tolerate warmth — for example, genes that inhibit feathering around the neck — researchers might be able to breed the traits into other populations.

Read the full, original article: [Research Could Lead to a New Breed of Superchicken](#)