

Will regulators show flexibility toward 'double-muscled' pigs made by editing single gene?

Belgian Blue cattle are hulking animals that provide unusually large amounts of prized, lean cuts of beef, the result of decades of selective breeding. Now, a team of scientists from South Korea and China says that it has created the porcine equivalent using a much faster method.

These 'double-muscled' pigs are made by disrupting, or editing, a single gene — a change that is much less dramatic than those made in conventional genetic modification, in which genes from one species are transplanted into another. As a result, their creators hope that regulators will take a lenient stance towards the pigs.

Jin-Soo Kim, a molecular biologist at Seoul National University who is leading the work, argues that his gene edits merely speed up a process that could, at least in principle, occur through a more natural route. "We could do this through breeding," he says, "but then it would take decades."

Because gene editing is a relatively new phenomenon, countries have only just started to consider how to regulate it in agricultural plants and animals. There are some signs that government agencies will view it more leniently than they do conventional forms of genetic modification: regulators in the United States and Germany have already declared that a few gene-edited crops fall outside of their purview because no new DNA has been incorporated into the genome. But Tetsuya Ishii, who studies international biotechnology regulation at the Hokkaido University in Sapporo, Japan, and who has done an international comparison on GM regulations, says that gene editing will raise increasing alarm as it progresses in animals.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Super-musclly pigs created by small genetic tweak](#)