

US, China investing heavily in CRISPR research

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U.S. companies racing to develop a promising gene editing technology are up against a formidable competitor – the Chinese government.

China has long set its heart on building an expertise in genomics and its government is pouring funds into a new – and sometimes controversial tool – called Crispr, encouraging its researchers to advance the technology. Chinese scientists say they were among the first in using Crispr to make wheat resistant to a common fungal disease, dogs more muscular and pigs with leaner meat.

The scientific research bankrolled by the Chinese government could eventually be tapped by agricultural and pharmaceutical companies. Programs funded by Beijing are, among other things, working on disease-resistant tomatoes, breast cancer treatments and increasing the oil content in soy beans. In the southern city of Guangzhou, researchers who received government funds went a step further, sparking an international ethical debate last year after tweaking the genetic make up of human embryos using Crispr for the first time.

“I would rank the U.S. and China as first and second Crispr-Cas9 research countries, respectively, at this time. Both countries have much strength in this area,” said Paul Knoepfler, an associate professor of cell biology and human anatomy at the UC Davis School of Medicine in California, who recently published a book titled “GMO Sapiens” discussing the application of gene-modifying technology on humans. “The U.S. currently gets the edge in high-profile papers, Crispr biotech and intellectual property. China has published a lot in Crispr animals.”

Read full, original post: [China Invests in Crispr Gene Editing Tool](#)