

What's next for CRISPR patent dispute?

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There is no shortage of optimism about the scientific potential of CRISPR–Cas9, a technique that can precisely alter the genomes of everything from wheat to elephants. But there is a great deal of confusion over who will benefit financially from its use.

On 10 March, the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) will begin an investigation into who deserves the patent on using CRISPR–Cas9 to edit genes. This 'patent interference' could determine who profits from CRISPR in coming years.

One patent claim comes from a team led by molecular biologist Jennifer Doudna at the University of California, Berkeley, and microbiologist Emmanuelle Charpentier, now at Umeå University in Sweden and the Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology in Berlin. They published a 2012 paper demonstrating that the Cas9 enzyme can be directed to cut specific sites in isolated DNA, and initiated their patent application on 25 May 2012.

Another team, led by Feng Zhang at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts, published a 2013 paper demonstrating the application of CRISPR–Cas9 in mammalian cells. Zhang's team began a patent application on 12 December 2012.

Although the Berkeley team filed first, the Broad team submitted its application to an expedited review programme, and was awarded the patent in April 2014. The Berkeley team then requested, and was granted, a patent interference against the initial Broad patent plus 11 related Broad patents.

A panel of three USPTO patent judges will hear evidence from both sides to establish which team invented the application of CRISPR–Cas9 for gene editing.

Read full, original post: [How the US CRISPR patent probe will play out](#)