Gene editing could create healthier, more sustainable livestock

Gene editing, led by the discovery of CRISPR-Cas, promises widespread, accelerated, and targeted discoveries. … Gene editing could eventually provide a catalog of options for farmers to order exactly what they need…

With gene editing, the ability to pick livestock traits will be just as easy. Don't want to have to dehorn your dairy cattle? There's an option for that.

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People may be open to genetically engineered animals if it means more humane treatment, such as dairy calves that no longer require painful dehorning. Randall Prather, distinguished professor of animal sciences at the University of Missouri and director of the National Swine Resource and Research Center, helped develop pigs resistant to the deadly PRRS virus using CRISPR technology.

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One benefit for society, he says, is sustainability. Animals with better feed conversions help the planet. "If every animal is 10% more productive, you can feed 10% more people with 10% fewer inputs. If you are concerned about animal welfare and earth welfare, you should be pro gene editing."

For example, with the technology, you can raise heat-tolerant productive dairy cows in Sub-Saharan Africa, he says. "You change a single gene that allows the cow to thermoregulate better in heat. It is precision breeding."

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: How Gene Editing Will Change Agriculture