

US national security advisors map plans to counter rogue gene drives

The JASONs, a [group of elite scientists that advises the US government on national security](#), has weighed in on issues ranging from cyber security to renewing America's nuclear arsenal. But at a meeting in June, the secretive group took stock of a new threat: gene drives....

That meeting forms part of a broader US national security effort this year to grapple with the possible risks and benefits of a technology that could [drive species extinct and alter whole ecosystems](#). On 19 July, the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) announced US\$65 million in funding to scientists studying gene-editing technologies....

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Under the DARPA program, seven teams won four-year contracts. [With military funding, they plan] to develop tools to counter rogue gene drives that spread out of control. Such methods include chemicals that block gene-editing or 'anti-gene drives' that can reverse a genetic modification or immunize unaltered wild organisms so they are resistant to a gene drive.

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Todd Kuiken, who studies policy relating to synthetic biology at North Carolina State University in Raleigh,...has qualms about the US military's interest in the field; with Safe Genes, DARPA has become the world's largest government funder of gene-drive research. Kuiken worries that this could sow suspicions about gene drives in parts of the world that view the US military in a less-than-favorable light....

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: US defence agencies grapple with gene drives