

Geneticist Alison Van Eenennaam: Genetic engineering could save farm animals from disease

Alison Van Eenennaam is one of agriculture's leading voices of reason and persuasion in support of good science in food production.

The personable and articulate cattle geneticist from the University of California-Davis can talk about genetic engineering of animals or GMO corn and soybeans, and make nearly everyone believe and trust her. Such a trait is sorely lacking in many of our industry experts.

She spoke at the Cattle Industry Convention about the future of genetically engineered (GE) animals.

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Van Eenennaam says the newest wave of animal genetic engineering involves not a gene transfer process, but rather a technique that is often called knock-out technology. A single gene is modified (or knocked out) to change how an animal performs and what it passes to offspring. It might add extra muscling, make cows hornless, or help pigs resist disease.

While it's controversial to some, Van Eenennaam questions whether gene editing is really the same as GMO, where a gene from one species is transferred to another.

"It's estimated we lose about 20% of animal production to disease. What if these new technologies can change that and maybe provide an alternative to antibiotics?" she asks.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Cattle geneticist and active spokesperson for ag](#)