

China seeks to dislodge US dominance in CRISPR gene-edited crops

China is seeking a lead in editing plant genes, potentially shifting the epicenter of the emerging agricultural technology toward the East.

Syngenta AG, the seed and chemical giant now owned by state-owned China National Chemical Corp., is [building up a Beijing hub](#) for developing new gene-editing technologies like Crispr-Cas9, which enable new ways to alter DNA.

The company also intends to piggyback off research being pursued by Chinese universities and access a broader talent pool than rivals like Monsanto Co. and DowDuPont Inc. compete for in the U.S.

“The government is very supportive of this technology in China,” said Erik Fyrwald, Syngenta’s chief executive, who said the company is investing tens of millions of dollars to develop gene editing. “It’s just natural for us to build it up there for China, and for the world.”

That is helping to stoke long-running worries among U.S. farmers, academics and companies that the forefront of agricultural science could swing from the U.S. Farm Belt to China, where the government has encouraged the development of large-scale, Western-style farming operations to boost domestic food production, and rely less on imports.

Over the long term, some say, that could increase U.S. producers’ reliance on Chinese technology, and potentially limit their access to cutting-edge methods.

Read full, original post: [Scientists in China Race to Edit Crop Genes, Sowing Unease in U.S.](#) (behind paywall)