

As sugar demand falls, gene editing could 'reinvent' sugarcane as green energy

Sugar has long been a source of energy for people, but now scientists believe they are close to unlocking its DNA secrets and harnessing its potential as a green fuel.

As demand for the sweet stuff in food takes a tumble, its 'reinvention' as a source of green energy could protect the \$2 billion industry — if the development of biofuels attracts enough investment.

The University of Queensland [in Australia] is conducting the first gene-editing experiments that could tailor the sugarcane plant to better produce biofuels and bioplastics. Director of the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation, Robert Henry, is working with a global team to sequence the sugarcane genome as part of a joint project with the Genome Institute based in the US.

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When sugar is made....[t]he process leaves behind the fiber, known as bagasse, that factories already burn to generate electricity. But this fiber can also be further processed into much more complex products....“We’re looking at really using sugarcane as a replacement for things like oil, to produce those chemical feedstocks that we traditionally get from oil, so we provide a renewable alternative,” [Henry Said.]

Read full, original article: [Cracking sugar's DNA to produce new green energy to power the world](#)