

CRISPR-edited pigs could blunt swine fever epidemic threatening China's food supply

Inside a fortresslike megafarm on the outskirts of Beijing, dozens of pink and black pigs forage and snooze, unfazed by the chilly spring air. These experimentally bred hogs are fortified with a gene for regulating heat, buffering them against northern China's hypothermia-inducing winters.

The gene that researcher Jianguo Zhao inserted into the pigs' DNA is among dozens of examples of genetic engineering underway in China—and in rival laboratories across the world—to create super pigs. For years, the quest was for better-tasting, stronger, and faster-growing swine. Now, in the wake of a devastating global outbreak of African swine fever, the more crucial need is to safeguard food security, and keep hogs alive.

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In pigs alone, Chinese researchers have successfully made 40 different genetic modifications with Crispr, Science reported in July.

There is no treatment or vaccine for the [swine flue] virus, which has spread from Africa to Europe and now Asia, where it has led to the deaths and destruction of about a quarter of the planet's pigs. Creating pigs that can naturally thwart the disease would represent the holy grail of porcine genetic engineering.

Read full, original article: [China's Mutant Pigs Could Help Save Nation From Pork Apocalypse](#)