

Gene editing could help safeguard \$400 million worth of wheat during coldest winter months

Up to \$400 million worth of grain is lost during winter in Western Australia each year when cold conditions freeze wheat crops as grain is forming.

Plant biotechnologists at Murdoch University are working on a two-year project using gene-editing technology to encourage frost tolerant proteins already present in wheat to become active during the coldest months of Australian winter.

Director of the biotechnology centre at Murdoch University Professor Michael Jones said if the work was successful, local wheat varieties would be able to tolerate an extra two degrees of frost as a result of the work.

He pointed to winter wheat grown in Europe as an example of grain able to withstand freezing conditions.

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