

As climate disruptions escalate, CRISPR gene editing could create animal breeds resistant to disease, droughts and heatwaves

“It is every bit as important that we use the enormous power of gene editing to create breeds of animals that are resistant to disease, droughts and heatwaves as it is to fashion new crop varieties,” said Professor Bruce Whitelaw of Edinburgh’s Roslin Institute. “This is particularly important as global warming intensifies and we strive to ensure we are protected against future outbreaks of zoonotic diseases.”

The value of gene editing in this latter field is shown by work carried out at Roslin and Imperial College London, where scientists have identified a gene that may confer resistance to [avian] influenza.

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Other recent developments in the gene editing of livestock include the creation of pigs that can [fight off a disease](#) known as porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSV), which is devastating pig herds globally. “Using gene editing this way has enormous power to save billions of pounds and to stop animal suffering,” said Whitelaw.

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“Some people just don’t like the idea of genetically altering animals,” said Whitelaw. “But we have been doing that for thousands of years, and have turned wolves into chihuahuas and no one seems to mind.”

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)