

The gene editing solution that could save one million African (cash) cows a year

All around the world millions of people feed their families and make their living from cows, whose meat and milk has been a staple of human diets for thousands of years. This situation makes the East Coast Fever, a common tick-borne disease that kills off infected cows in a matter of weeks, a big problem. That's particularly true because the [fever is only found in African countries](#), where cow farmers are more likely to be poorer and where government welfare or assistance is [more likely to be patchy or non-existent](#). In these cases, any cow deaths can be economically challenging if not downright ruinous for their owners.

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It seems that some cows are genetically predisposed to have some immunity to the disease. That means if farmers owned only cows that carry these genes, they'd be much less likely to face financial trouble if an infected tick hit up their herd.

Getting enough such fever-fighting cows for all the African farmers could happen in two ways. The first is selective breeding. Basically farmers screen cattle for the desired genes and breed the ones who have it, in the hope they will pass it along to their calves. The other option is gene editing, where scientists tinker away at cow foetal DNA to ensure the right genes are in there.

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