

# Keep America First in Agriculture

Why regulatory control of gene editing in livestock should move from the FDA to the USDA



The U.S. has always been the global leader in agricultural innovation, but we're running the risk of falling behind on an advancement that positively impacts animal and human health: gene editing.

**Gene editing**, technology that allows for precise, small changes to specific genes, can help farmers breed healthier, more resilient livestock.

While other countries are moving quickly on this technology to gain competitive advantage, the future of gene editing is uncertain in the United States due to a regulatory framework being advanced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

**Currently, the FDA has regulatory control over this technology, but the USDA is the only agency prepared to responsibly regulate gene editing. Here's why:**

## USDA

The **USDA's** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service already applies a review process for genetic editing in plants, which can easily be adopted for livestock.

The **USDA** has the understanding and history of working directly with livestock and agriculture, unlike the FDA which regulates packaged food, drugs and medical devices.

Under **USDA**, gene-edited animals would be regulated according to the existing Animal Health Protection Act.

## FDA

Under **FDA** regulation, this technology will face an impractical, lengthy and expensive approval process, putting the American livestock industry behind and risking hundreds of thousands of jobs and nearly 6% of our GDP.

**FDA** approval will be very difficult to obtain, taking at least 5 years for pigs and 10 years for cattle — drastically longer than approval processes in other countries.

The **FDA's** regulation will inaccurately classify livestock as drugs and farms as drug-manufacturing facilities, with significant consequences for the international trade in animals and animal products.

### Gene Editing Explained



Allows for **targeted changes** and does not necessarily involve the introduction of foreign DNA.



Accelerates the process of **natural improvements** from traditional livestock breeding practices over time.



Dramatically **enhances animal health** and welfare. For example, it could make pigs resistant to highly contagious and economically devastating swine diseases such as PRRS and African Swine Fever.

The impacts of FDA regulation of gene editing are severe and will affect an industry that accounts for more than half a million U.S. jobs. Overall, an estimated 21.6 million full- and part-time jobs are related to the agricultural and food sectors—11.0 percent of total U.S. employment. Direct on-farm employment accounted for about 2.6 million of these jobs. The livestock industry contributes \$1.02 trillion annually to the U.S. economy, which would be severely threatened by FDA regulation.

The U.S. has a long tradition of investing in research, pioneering new techniques, and leading the implementation of technologies at farms around the world under the USDA — **let's keep it that way.**

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