

Enviropig breeding put on hold
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The research will continue but breeding and work on live animals will stop

The Enviropig is being put into hibernation.

Ontario Pork has redirected its funding for the genetically modified pig, so that maintaining a breeding herd of the pigs will no longer be viable, and so the genetics will be put into "genetic hibernation."

The pigs were modified to secrete phytase in their saliva. The enzyme then flowed through the pig with its feed, resulting in better digestion of the phytate portion of the feed.

That results in lower phosphorus levels in the pig's manure. As a result, it has been considered one of the first genetic modifications which helps the environment.

However, with the public decidedly lukewarm about eating genetically modified food, and no one who is commercially developing the pigs, the maintenance of the herd of pigs wasn't viable.

Amy Cronin, vice-chair of Ontario Pork's board, said that the board funds research, not maintaining animals, and decided to move research funds in other areas.

A spokesperson from the University of Guelph said that research will continue, but using data analysis and the publication of pending papers, but that continual breeding and generation of live animals will stop.

The main researcher has also decided that the project is mature enough for someone else to take over.

The university's business development office will continue looking for a new academic or industry partner or technology receptor to take over the lead in commercializing the technology.