Monsanto Licenses CRISPR From Broad Institute for Ag-Bio Applications

Sep 22, 2016 | a GenomeWeb staff reporter

NEW YORK (GenomeWeb) – Monsanto announced today that it has obtained a global, non-exclusive licensing agreement from the Broad Institute for agricultural applications of CRISPR genome editing technology.

CRISPR-based genome editing offers "site-directed integration of specific genes as well as the opportunity to enhance beneficial [plant characteristics] or remove undesired plant characteristics," Monsanto said in a statement.

"The license to CRISPR/Cas from the Broad Institute provides access to an exciting tool for our growing body of genome-editing research," Monsanto biotechnology lead Tom Adams added. "Genome-editing technology is complementary to our ongoing discovery research and provides an incredible resource to further unlock our world-leading germplasm and genome libraries."

Financial and other terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

Monsanto joins DuPont Pioneer and Calyxt in pursuing CRISPR/Cas9 for ag-bio applications. DuPont Pioneer has cross-licensed CRISPR/Cas9 technology with CRISPR technology firm Caribou Biosciences, and has licensed Cas9 technology from Lithuania's Vilnius University. Calyxt, a subsidiary of Cellectis, has licensed patents covering the use of CRISPR/Cas9 in plants from the University of Minnesota.

Last week, German pharmaceutical company Bayer announced plans for a $66 billion merger with Monsanto. Bayer's Crop Science division has partnered on plant genome-editing with Cellectis, but has not licensed any CRISPR/Cas9 technology. However, Bayer's Life Science Center has licensed CRISPR/Cas9 for certain biomedical applications.

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