DuPont, Caribou Biosciences Ink Strategic Alliance on CRISPR, Cross-License IP

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NEW YORK (GenomeWeb) – DuPont and Caribou Biosciences today announced a strategic alliance focused on agricultural applications of CRISPR/Cas9 genome editing.

Under the terms of the agreement, DuPont and Caribou have cross-licensed their patent portfolios. DuPont will receive exclusive intellectual property rights for CRISPR/Cas9 technology for application in row crops and non-exclusive rights in other agricultural and industrial applications.

The agreement also stipulates a multi-year research collaboration between the firms to enhance the CRISPR/Cas9 toolkit. Other financial details of the licensing agreement were not disclosed, though DuPont also has made a minority investment in Caribou for an undisclosed amount.

"DuPont intends to lead in the application of [CRISPR] technology to improve agricultural productivity and enhance food security," DuPont Executive VP James Borel said in a statement, adding that CRISPR/Cas9 has "significant potential to advance plant breeding and expand the range of agricultural solutions available to farmers."

"DuPont has been responsible for numerous breakthroughs in CRISPR biology and we are excited to gain access to their impressive knowledge and expertise in developing and applying Cas-mediated genome editing technologies in promising commercial areas," Caribou President and CEO Rachel Haurwitz said in a statement.

The agreement with Caribou gives DuPont broad license to use CRISPR/Cas9 in ag-bio applications. In June, DuPont acquired an exclusive license to commercial and agricultural uses of CRISPR/Cas9 genome editing technology from Lithuania's Vilnius University.

Caribou has now signed licensing agreements with and received investment from giants in two different industries. In January, Caribou signed a research collaboration and investment agreement with pharmaceutical firm Novartis.

In April it raised $11 million in Series A financing.

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