

China clones woollier cashmere goats

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Goat herders cull the hair from their mountain goats on a road near Laishui in eastern China's Hebei province. Scientists in China have cloned a dozen goats engineered with a gene that boosts wool growth, with a view to increasing output of cashmere fibre, state-run media reported Wednesday.

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Each of the cloned Alpas cashmere [goats](#) can yield more than 1,000 grammes (35 ounces) of the fine wool a year, compared to 600 grammes from ordinary goats, Xinhua news agency said.

The project was conducted by scientists at the Laboratory for Mammal [Reproduction](#) and [Biotechnology](#) at Inner Mongolia University in northern China.

Liu Shaoqing, manager of the farm in the Inner Mongolian city of Erdos where the project was conducted, said 14 goats were cloned from February to March.

Twelve of them were successfully cloned to carry a special gene that produces rich cashmere, an expensive fibre widely used to produce high-end garments, he was quoted as saying.

Technology developed by the laboratory is also being applied at local farms to clone cows rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which have been linked to cardio-vascular health and are also considered good for the brain and eyes.

Some cows have already been successfully cloned, the report said, without specifying whether the fatty acids were in the cattle's beef or their milk.

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