

Saudi, China scientists decode camel DNA

June 9 2010

Scientists from Saudi Arabia and China said on Wednesday that they had completed mapping the genome of the Arabian camel.

It took 20 scientists from Riyadh's King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology and China's Shenzhen-based BGI -- formerly the Beijing Genomics Institute -- more than one year to decode the entire genetic makeup of the single-humped [camel](#), *Camelus dromedarius*, the omnipresent native of the Arabian peninsula.

"The Arabian camel today enters a highly exclusive club of selected few mammals which have had their full [genome](#) sequenced and analysed," the two institutions said in a joint statement.

Sequencing and analysing the entire camel genome, which has "remarkable similarities" to cattle, could lead to a better understanding of the camel's ability to survive in the harsh desert environment, they said.

Unlocking the genetics underpinning the camel's [immune system](#) could lead to potential medical discoveries, and the genome data can also help scientists understand better how the mammal produces its highly nutritious and medically valuable milk, they said.

"The sequencing of the camel genome achieved by KACST and BGI will contribute greatly to the world-wide genomics and post genomics research," said BGI president Jian Wang.

"We look forward to further expand our understanding of the camel's physiological and biochemical characteristics and to bring it to application for the benefit of mankind," he said.

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Citation: Saudi, China scientists decode camel DNA (2010, June 9) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-06-saudi-china-scientists-decode-camel.html>

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