

Copy cat: Chinese firm creates first cloned kitten

September 5 2019, by Qian Ye



Garlic's owner said he hoped the character of the kitten clone would be like that of the original cat

Seven months after Huang Yu's pet cat Garlic died, the British shorthair was given a 10th life.

Born on July 21, the new Garlic was created by Chinese firm Sinogene, becoming the Beijing-based company's first successfully copied cat.

The pet-cloning outfit has made more than 40 pet dogs—a procedure that costs a hefty 380,000 yuan (\$53,000), while the price for a cat comes in at 250,000 yuan (\$35,000).

Mi Jidong, the company's chief executive officer, told AFP that despite the high price tag, not all clients were high earners.

"In fact, a large proportion of customers are young people who have only graduated in the last few years," he said.

"Whatever the origin of pets, owners will see them as part of the family. Pet cloning meets the emotional needs of young generations."

Huang, 23, was overjoyed on first seeing Garlic's second incarnation, saying the "similarity between the two cats is more than 90 percent".

"When Garlic died, I was very sad," said Huang. "I couldn't face the facts because it was a sudden death. I blame myself for not taking him to the hospital in time, which led to his death."

The happy owner says he hopes the personality of the new Garlic is as similar to his old white-and-grey cat as its appearance.



The cost of cloning a cat comes in at 250,000 yuan (\$35,000)

With a growing pet market in China, and a huge appetite among their owners for spending, Mi thinks the market for pet cloning is also set to rocket.

According to a report by Pet Fair Asia and pet website Goumin.com, pet-related spending in China reached 170.8 bn yuan (\$23.7 billion) in 2018.

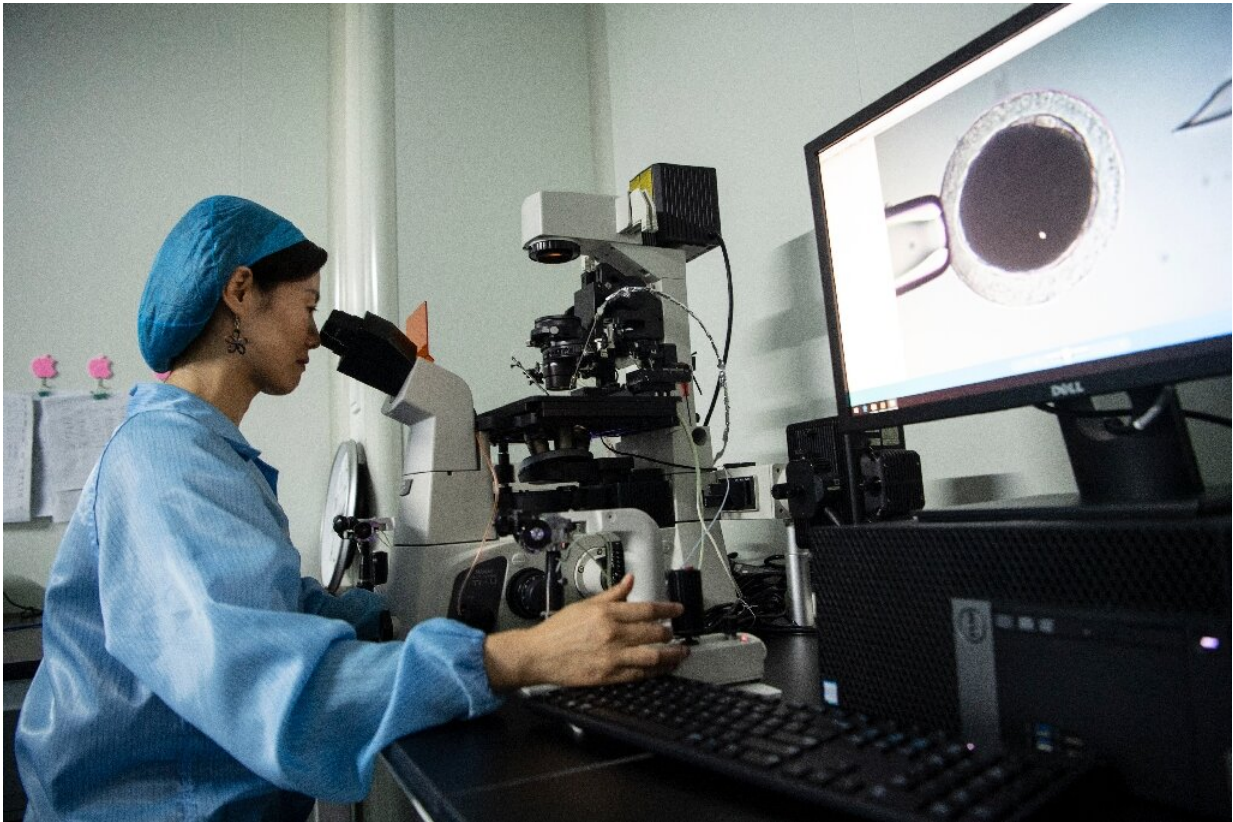
And the country's scientists have big aspirations for their next cloning challenge, working on the theory that if cats can be cloned, so can pandas.

Chen Dayuan—an expert at the Chinese Academy of Sciences who has been researching giant panda cloning for 20 years—said there could even be scope for cats to give birth to cloned baby pandas, which are smaller than baby cats despite their large size when fully grown.

Pet cloning is illegal in many countries but approved in countries including South Korea and the US, where singer Barbra Streisand announced last year she had cloned her dog.



The pet-cloning outfit has created more than 40 pet dogs



Pet cloning is illegal in many countries but approved in countries including South Korea and the US

The first major success in animal cloning was Dolly the sheep, born in Britain in 1996 as the first mammal cloned from an adult cell.

In 2005, researchers in South Korea cloned the first dog. The Soom Biotech Research Foundation in Seoul says it has cloned some 800 pets and charges \$100,000 each.

© 2019 AFP

Citation: Copy cat: Chinese firm creates first cloned kitten (2019, September 5) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-09-cat-chinese-firm-cloned-kitten.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.