

China arrests scientist for alleged fund-swindling

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Chinese authorities have arrested a leading scientist in transgene biology on the charge of swindling state scientific research funds, the government said.

Li Ning, a professor at China Agricultural University and a member of the elite Chinese Academy of Engineering, was suspected of swindling state funds in his research project on the cultivation of new transgene biological species, the Ministry of Science and Technology said Friday.

His arrest came after national audits found seven professors from five universities obtained research funds of more than 25 million yuan (\$4.08 million) through false means. The ministry said two of them have been convicted and sentenced to prison. It said another two professors and a doctoral student also have been arrested.

Academic corruption is prevalent in China's universities and research institutes, where plagiarism, bribery for promotion and misuse of government funds are common.

After visiting Fudan University in Shanghai earlier this year, a special discipline inspection team for the central government found the management of research funds at the institute to be chaotic and its construction projects at a branch campus to be in violation of rules and prone to corruption, the report said. It did not provide further details.

An admissions officer at Beijing-based Renmin University was arrested in May on suspicion of taking bribes from students seeking admission.

The report by the Ministry of Science and Technology found state funds had been falsely obtained, misappropriated or embezzled.

The Chinese Academy of Engineering told the official Xinhua News Agency on Saturday that it would abide by the final court verdict and handle

Li's case in accordance with the academy's bylaws.

Inducted into the academy in 2007, Li also has been the head of the State Key Laboratories for Agro Biotechnology, where he and his colleagues have engineered cows to produce proteins that are closer to, but still not identical to, the concentrations found in human milk.

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