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Limagrain and Qi Biodesign sign worldwide licensing agreement for genome editing technologies to accelerate the development of next-generation crop varieties



Limagrain and leading genome editing player Beijing Qi Biodesign Biotechnology Co., Ltd. ("Qi Biodesign") today announced a global licensing agreement granting Limagrain access to a portfolio of genome editing technologies for field and vegetable crops. This collaboration agreement marks a new milestone in Limagrain's strategy to expand into next-generation breeding technologies and reinforce its leadership in crop innovation.

Leveraging the full potential of genome editing

Genome editing is emerging as one of the most transformative innovations in modern plant breeding. While first-generation CRISPR technologies have already demonstrated their value, the next phase of crop improvement will increasingly depend on access to a diverse portfolio of complementary tools, each suited to specific crop, trait and breeding challenges.

Through this agreement, Limagrain gains access to a portfolio of foundational and advanced genome editing technologies developed by Qi Biodesign. It includes immediate access to a novel and differentiating CRISPR nuclease and establishes a framework for Limagrain to benefit from future innovations emerging from Qi Biodesign's research pipeline.

These technologies will expand the range of solutions available to Limagrain's research programs, creating new opportunities to address complex breeding challenges and accelerate the development of improved crop varieties.

A timely opportunity for European agriculture

The agreement comes at a crucial moment for European agriculture, as the European Union moves towards an updated regulatory framework for New Genomic Techniques (NGTs).

By combining high-performing germplasm, breeding tools and genome-editing technologies, Limagrain is further enhancing its ability to translate scientific advances into practical solutions for farmers facing climate change, increasing disease pressures, resource constraints and growing sustainability expectations.

A strategic partnership to deliver innovative solutions for agriculture

Building on Qi Biodesign's leadership in genome-editing innovation, its cutting-edge scientific expertise and its strong ties with leading academic institutions, the agreement further strengthens Limagrain's position as a trusted player in advanced breeding technologies.

It also highlights the diverse ecosystem of technologies and expertise that will shape the future of genome editing to deliver value for farmers and support more sustainable agricultural systems.

Sébastien CHAUFFAUT, Chief Executive Officer of Limagrain and Chairman of the Scientific Committee, stated:

"The future of plant breeding will be driven by scientific excellence, technological diversity and strategic partnerships. This agreement with Qi Biodesign reflects Limagrain's commitment to remaining at the forefront of innovation in plant breeding. By broadening our access to complementary technologies, we're strengthening our capacity to develop the next generation of crop varieties and help farmers meet some of the world's most pressing agricultural challenges."

Kevin ZHAO, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of Qi Biodesign, added:

"We are delighted to collaborate with Limagrain, one of the world's leading agricultural seed companies. This agreement represents an important step in bringing Qi Biodesign's proprietary genome editing technologies into broader crop research and breeding applications. By combining Qi Biodesign's innovative technologies with Limagrain's extensive expertise in crop genetics, breeding and global seed markets, we look forward to accelerating the development of improved crop varieties and delivering meaningful innovations for sustainable agriculture."

About Limagrain

Limagrain is a global company with deep local roots. Our parent company is an agricultural cooperative based in the Limagne-Val d'Allier plain, in the heart of Central France's Auvergne region, while we are an international seed and agri-food group with some 9,600 employees working in 53 countries.

At Limagrain, we breed, produce, and sell high value-added field and vegetable seeds, drawing on our long history of expertise in plant improvement. Uniquely, we also have agri-food chain businesses, in France and internationally, to transform the produce of the Cooperative's 1,300 farmer members.

The world faces escalating climatic, environmental and demographic challenges, and our various businesses help address its food and farming issues. As the 4th largest seed company in the world, we achieved sales of 2,500 M€ in 2024-2025.

www.limagrain.com- #Limagrain

About Qi Biodesign:

Beijing Qi Biodesign Biotechnology Co., Ltd. ("Qi Biodesign") is a biotechnology company dedicated to developing and applying next-generation genome editing technologies in agriculture and plant biotechnology.

Qi Biodesign has built a proprietary platform that brings together a portfolio of editing technologies, including novel DNA nucleases and methods for targeted large DNA insertion, along with deep expertise in plant transformation that extends across more than 50 different plant species.

Through close collaboration with research institutions and industry partners around the world, Qi Biodesign works to translate these cutting-edge technologies into practical applications that address real challenges in agriculture. Qi Biodesign is headquartered in Beijing and has raised \$90 million USD in funding to date and continues to advance precision biotechnology while accelerating the development and commercialization of next-generation biological innovations.

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