

World's first robotic pig cloning successful in Tianjin

Test results now appear to show an attempt at robot-involved pig cloning at a university in Tianjin has been a success, reports the China News.



The world's first case of robot-involved pig cloning hailed a success at Nankai University in Tianjin, July 3, 2017. [Photo: sina.com.cn]

According to the report, 13 cloned pigs delivered by two separate females in April are unrelated to their "surrogate mothers," but do have kinship with their DNA donors.

While surrogate cloning is not a new technique, this case involves the entire somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) process being completed robotically, said the research group from Nankai University (NKU).

Somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), involves taking an enucleated oocyte, or egg cell, and implanting a donor nucleus from the soma, or the body, of another cell. It's the standard technique used in reproductive cloning.

But because the technique is very precise, the cloning process is considered one of the most complicated in micro-medicine.

Due to the manual failure rates, SCNT done by human hands has led to a bottleneck of the development of cloning technology, according to Nankai University researchers.

To overcome this, the research team from Nankai University has developed the robotic process which it says can significantly reduce the damage done to cells, which should significantly increase the ability of researchers to test new theories in the cloning process.

Nurses pay, and pay for those on the Minimum Wage.

There has been discussion of how much nurses get paid and whether they can get more than a 1% increase during the pay cap. I thought it would be a good idea to report the scales published on the web and invite comment on what would be the right answer on their future pay.

According to the official sites a nurse currently starts on £22,128 a year. This rises to £28,746 a year over a seven year period, with increments of 4% in all but the first year when it is a 2.5% increase. In inner London the sums are £26,553 rising to £34,495. In outer London the nurse receives 15% more than the national scale. The nurse would also receive whatever general pay award there was on top of the annual increment. The site says " Staff will normally progress to the next paypoint annually until they reach the top of the pay band."

If a nurse becomes a senior nurse or a specialist nurse the pay scale then rises further, up to £35,577, or £42,692 in London.

The 1% overall cap does not mean that a public sector employee only gets 1%. These annual increments are available in some jobs other than nursing as well. An individual may well get promoted and receive better pay for more responsibility, or undertake further training and get higher pay for more skills.

There are two issues to discuss. Are the starting levels too low, and are the annual increments correct?

The government has sought to tackle low pay at the bottom end of the payscale by increasing the Minimum/Living wage for those in the unskilled jobs. The pay for someone on the minimum in 2010 has risen by £3200 a year (full time on the minimum) , taking the hourly rate from £5.93 to £7.50, an increase of 26% over that period. Further increases are planned as it is still low. These increases were of course exempt from the pay cap.

Prime Minister to visit Germany, France and UK

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull will depart Australia tomorrow to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit in Hamburg, Germany, on 7-8 July. This will be followed

by official visits to France and the United Kingdom.

The G20 is the premier forum for global economic cooperation. The Summit is a unique opportunity for Australia to engage with the largest and most advanced economies in the world.

The Prime Minister will discuss with global counterparts the importance of combatting terrorism, the benefits of trade and open markets, energy and sustainable development, women's participation, digitalisation and ensuring the benefits of a strong economy can be shared by all.

The Prime Minister will also meet with German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss our strong bilateral relationship and how Australia and Germany can cooperate in addressing shared challenges.

Following the G20, the Prime Minister will travel to France to meet with President Emmanuel Macron and strengthen our economic and security cooperation. He will also formally open the new Australian Future Submarine Office in Cherbourg.

Prior to his return to Australia, the Prime Minister will also visit the United Kingdom where he will have an audience with Her Majesty the Queen, and meet Prime Minister Theresa May and senior members of her government. The Prime Minister will reinforce our extremely close relationship with the UK, including strengthening our counter-terrorism cooperation.

While in the UK, the Prime Minister will also pay his respects to the victims of last month's June London Bridge terrorist attack, and will meet British first responders to convey Australia's gratitude for their bravery and assistance.

[China starts emergency flood response in Guangxi](#)

China issued a grade-IV emergency response on Monday for rain and floods that have left 16 people dead and 10 missing in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.



Soldiers clear away mud after a flood at Riverside Park in Liucheng County of Liuzhou City, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, July 3, 2017. Works of epidemic prevention and mud-cleaning are underway as floods subsided in central China's Hunan Province and south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. (Xinhua/Deng Keyi)

Heavy rain started in parts of Guangxi on Saturday, forcing the relocation of 92,000 residents, according to the regional civil affairs department.

The disaster has caused around 2.9 billion yuan (430 million U.S. dollars) in direct economic losses.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) and the China National Commission for Disaster Reduction have sent teams to assist relief work on the scene.

A grade-IV response, the lowest in China's emergency response system, requires a 24-hour alerts, daily damage reports, and funds and relief delivered within 48 hours.

Guangxi disaster response and civil affairs authorities have delivered relief supplies and fund of 3.6 million yuan to affected areas.

[Thousands battle floods along Yangtze](#)

River

Thousands of soldiers, armed police, civil servants and members of the public are battling floods in several provinces along the Yangtze River.



Staff members clear away mud after a flood at a vegetable base in Lianyuan City, central China's Hunan Province, July 3, 2017. Works of epidemic prevention and mud-cleaning are underway as floods subsided in central China's Hunan Province and south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. (Xinhua/Zhang Yang)

In Hunan Province, the water level at the Changsha monitoring station in the Xiangjiang River, a major Yangtze tributary, reached a record high of 39.51 meters early Monday, higher than the previous record of 39.18 meters set by a massive flood in 1998.

Floods have inundated houses, uprooted trees, damaged cars and sabotaged roads in Changsha, capital of Hunan.

The public, even elementary school students who are on summer vacation, volunteered to help fill sandbags to prevent the water from overflowing. Fourth grader Yang Shan, who lives in downtown Changsha, distributed ropes and filled sandbags for soldiers to carry to the riverbank.

Intermittent rain is forecast to last in Changsha until Wednesday, and the city is under heavy pressure to battle flooding.

In neighboring Hubei Province, the Three Gorges Dam on the upper Yangtze has reduced water discharge by 70 percent in the last three days.

Its flow was 27,000 cubic meters per second before July 1, but has now been reduced to 8,000 cubic meters per second, according to the Yangtze River Flood Prevention Headquarters.

The reduction stopped 3 billion cubic meters of water and lowered the water level by up to 1.5 meters, the headquarters said.

"We hope the reduction of outflow will give soldiers and the people enough time to evacuate and stack up sand bags to battle the flood," said Wu Zhaohui, an official with the water resources bureau in Hubei Province.

In Hubei alone, 16,000 people are on high alert for flooding.

In eastern Jiangxi Province, 28,100 people are battling against the floods, as water levels in the Jiangxi section of the Yangtze and Poyang Lake, China's largest fresh water lake, have risen above warning levels.

Heavy downpours also hit Sichuan Province on the upper reaches of the Yangtze. Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport in the provincial capital of Chengdu was forced to close down for over an hour on Monday afternoon.

Nearly 8,000 passengers were affected and 40 outbound flights were delayed.

Besides provinces along the Yangtze, other southern areas of China have also been plagued by heavy rain.

Rain-triggered floods have killed 16 people and left 10 missing in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, with 91,600 local residents relocated so far, according to the regional civil affairs department.

According to the Ministry of Finance, a total of 1.88 billion yuan (276.8 million U.S. dollars) was allocated to 20 provinces and regions Monday to aid disaster relief.