- Supreme Court: Laws of nature, physical phenomena, and abstract ideas can’t be patented
- Patents are designed to encourage ($$) inventiveness
- Just because a patent is granted, doesn’t mean the owner can make, use, or sell the product
  - Federal, state, and local laws may intervene.
- What has been patented
  - Processes
    - Beer fermentation (Louis Pasteur)
  - Compositions containing living things
    - Sterility tests
    - Attenuated vaccines
- **Chakrabarty case (Supreme Court: 1980)**
  - He’d developed a **bacteria** capable of breaking down crude oil
  - Patent claim rejected since his patent was a “product of nature” and a living thing
  - **Decision**: Live, human-made micro-organism is patentable
    - Stimulated the growth of biotech in the 1980s
- **1987 PTO (patent and trademark office) announcement**
  - Non-naturally occurring nonhuman multicellular organisms are patentable
- Problems with transgenic animals  
  - Integrity of the species may be disturbed
  - But we’ve been doing that for centuries via selective breeding, etc.
- **Ethical Considerations**
  - Consequences of patenting animals
    - Can be addressed by regulation
  - Religious, spiritual, philosophical, metaphysical