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Science Focus

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IN INTERSTELLAR SPACE

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ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE?

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November 2019

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TEXAS, USA

Three of SpaceX's Raptor rockets undergo testing at the company's build and launch facility in Cameron County, Texas. The engines will power the next-generation Starship spacecraft, which is due to undertake its first orbital flight in 2020. Commercial operations – from launching satellites into orbit to refuelling other craft such as the ISS – will then commence in 2021.

In total, 43 Raptor engines will power Starship: six in the Starship spacecraft itself, and 37 more in the Super Heavy rocket which blasts the entire payload into space. Both parts of the craft are reusable: Starship measures 9x50m, has a payload capacity of 100 tonnes and can carry cargo, passengers or fuel, while Super Heavy measures 9m x68m, has a maximum lift-off capacity of 3,680 tonnes and, after launch, will return to the launch site and land upright on its six legs.

SPACE X

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