

SYNTHETIC MEAT

Federal Discussion: Earlier this year, the American Farm Bureau (AFBF) adopted a Nebraska Farm Bureau (NEFB) initiated amendment prohibiting the use of commonly known and industry recognized “meat” terms in the labeling and advertising of all lab-grown and plant-based alternatives; however, it did not address federal regulatory oversight.

On July 26, several animal agriculture industry organizations, including the AFBF, sent a letter to President Donald Trump asking him for assurance the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be the primary regulator of cell-cultured, lab-grown “meat.”

Both the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and USDA assert that they have jurisdiction over the products. Earlier this year, the USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) provided a 60-day period for comments or letters regarding an open petition to limit the definition of “beef” and “meat” to only products from live animals born, raised, and harvested in the traditional manner. NEFB signed an AFBF letter to FSIS indicating we do not support the use of commonly known and industry recognized “meat” terms in the labeling and advertising of all lab-grown and plant-based alternatives.

On June 15, the FDA indicated that it would be involved in the regulation of lab-grown or culture meat and seafood alternatives, and it is accepting comments.

AFBF and other agriculture organizations contend the USDA is uniquely equipped to ensure both elements: inspectors are on-site daily, and the USDA approves all product labels to ensure products are what they claim to be and to prevent consumers from being misled. Meat and poultry processing companies have been meeting the challenge of USDA inspection for decades. Cell-cultured meat and poultry companies can and should meet the same requirements.

State-level Discussion: Earlier this year, Missouri became the first state to make sure plant and lab-based meat makers can't use the term “meat” to describe their products. The Missouri State Legislature passed an omnibus agricultural bill that includes a provision to ban the use of the word “meat” to describe anything that is “not derived from harvested production livestock or poultry.” Missouri, unlike Nebraska, has a state-level meat labeling system.



Questions:

1. Should Farm Bureau policy support the regulation of synthetic meat at USDA, FDA, or a joint USDA/FDA regulatory scheme, not unlike biotech products which are regulated cooperatively by the USDA, FDA, and EPA?
2. Should Farm Bureau policy support state-level policies related to labeling synthetic meat?