

FAMILY FARMING AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

2018 SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

National Farmers Union is concerned with the development of imitation products that are being marketed as if they were meat. NFU is concerned with two categories of alternative products. One is a synthetic product made from alternative proteins. The second is tissue engineering meat from animal cells, also known as cultured meat.

Synthetic meat is derived from plants, insects, and other non-animal components. These products are currently being sold and labeled as meat, beef, chicken, etc. They are currently marketing this imitation meat as looking, tasting and smelling like authentic animal meat.

Cultured meat, also referred to as “clean meat”, is an end product in a new industry that uses science to grow meat in a laboratory known in that industry as tissue engineering. Very soon factory facilities will be producing large amounts of “artificial meat” based protein an industry they are calling cellular agriculture.

NFU disagrees with calling this beginning industry cellular agriculture when it has nothing to do with the term agriculture in any sense of its meaning. Agriculture is the planting and growing, breeding, and harvesting/slaughtering of animals, plants and fungi for food, fiber, biofuel, and other products used to sustain and enhance life.

The investors, scientists, and activists promoting these imitation meats are for the total elimination of traditional animal production of meat. They would like to see fewer acres in farm production. They believe that traditional means of growing livestock and crops is cumbersome and adversely affecting the environment. They would like to achieve their goal of displacing traditional livestock agriculture by cutting multiple stages of production in crop and livestock production. NFU knows this would catastrophically affect economic life in rural America. These imitation products will jeopardize family ranches and livestock producers and create meat factories which will most likely not be owned by families or small business owners but by large corporations which have already invested in the idea of cultured meat and synthetic meat.

NFU supports agricultural transparency and is continually committed to promoting consumer trust and education on how their food is produced on family farms.

NFU wants labeling that is truthful and not misleading. We urge the Department of Agriculture - Food Safety and Inspection Service to establish these labeling requirements:

- Define meat as tissue of an animal slaughtered/harvested in the traditional manner and derived from an animal. Define the labeling of meat as specific to this definition. Any other product not defined shall not be labeled as meat regardless of its origin.

- Define beef as meat of a bovine (cattle) that have been born, raised and slaughtered in the traditional manner.
 - Synthetic products from plant, insects, or other non-animal components and any product grown in labs from animal cells shall not be labeled beef.
 - Labels of beef should be specific to this definition. Any other product not as defined shall not be labeled as beef.
 - We urge that FSIS to define labeled beef as stated, as currently there are no labeling requirements for “beef”.
- Define poultry as meat of a domesticated fowl that have been born, raised and harvested for consumption. The labels of poultry should be specific to this definition. Any other product not as defined shall not be labelled as poultry or labelled as any of the common names for fowl like chicken, duck, turkey, etc.

The common names given to meat and animal products listed above are widely understood by consumers to be the tissue and flesh of animals that have been slaughtered for food. NFU wants those definitions to be limited as defined.

NFU urges the agriculture industry to unite together and protect the traditions of family ranches and beef production. We urge Congress to take action to support family farms and traditional food production. We believe food should be grown on family farms.