

How will religious authorities deal with lab-grown meat?

In Genesis, God granted humans dominion over animals. In modern times, that dominion has spawned one of the planet's biggest threats: a livestock industry that spews greenhouse gases, guzzles resources, and renders the lives of billions of animals brutish and short.

Last August, vexed by the problem, a Dutch physiologist named Mark Post came up with a solution: a burger no cow had to die for. He called it the "test-tube burger."

The result is "biochemically indistinguishable" from cow flesh, he says. "The only difference is we didn't have to slaughter the cow."

For rabbis, the first question is: Is it kosher? Certainly, there are many Jewish legal hurdles test-tube meat would have to clear before a definitive answer could be reached. Some, such as Rabbi Carl Feit, chair of the biology department at Yeshiva University, say cultured meat could still be kosher even if the donor animal isn't.

Feit points to the Jewish legal principle of nullification, which states that a trace amount of a forbidden substance can be fully absorbed into an acceptable one without rendering the second *treif*, or forbidden.

Judaism is not the only religion grappling with the ramifications of test-tube meat. Playing God may also be a concern for some Muslims, for whom *fitra*, or God-given naturalness, is a primary value, says Ebrahim Moosa, a professor of Islamic studies at the University of Notre Dame.

On the other hand, since the purpose of test-tube meat is to preserve the environment—by preventing environmental degradation and allowing more animals to live—it could also be seen as supporting the mandate of naturalness, Moosa says.

From a Hindu perspective, using an animal's cells to make meat constitutes an example of human arrogance, says Shaunaka Rishi Das, a Hindu priest and director of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies. Rishi Das explains that Hindus—most of whom abstain from meat—do not subscribe to the Western principle of dominion over nonhuman beings. Even if the animal is not killed, he says, humans are still asserting that its cells are theirs to use.

Read the full, original article: [Would lab-grown meat ever be kosher?](#)