

## Will synbio foods win over consumers?

Only two out of 10 Americans are willing to give lab meat – animal tissue grown without a living host – a go, according to a Pew Research Center poll.

Despite this queasiness over heavily modified food (a recent New York Times poll found more than 90 percent of Americans want GMOs labeled), a new era of so-called “extreme” genetic engineering is already dawning in grocery aisles.

While genetically modified organisms have had their DNA sequences changed, typically by having traits of another species spliced in with their own, synthetic biology, or simply “synbio,” involves the creation of entirely new organisms with DNA sequences created from whole cloth on a computer. These organisms, typically bacteria or algae, are used to produce valuable commodities such as flavorings and oils.

Research and development on these products is currently kept largely under wraps. Companies are closely guarding the technology – and perhaps the fact that they’re using it at all. Orange and vanilla flavors are currently being marketed and sold, but sellers are not identifying the companies using them and the companies are not identifying themselves.

To gain public acceptance, synbio companies must also sell the benefits of their offerings to a public that is still largely ignorant of the industry’s existence. Three out of four Americans know virtually nothing about the technology, a recent survey found.

Whatever direction synbio outfits head in their marketing campaigns, a fight is brewing. It’s one that will be shaped by public discourse on food options in light of the ecological pressures brought by world populations and rising affluence.

**Read full, original article:** [Technology is ready for synthetic foods. Are you?](#)