

McDonald's eyes lab-grown meat as food, agricultural companies aim to cut environmental impact

The world's biggest purchaser of beef is watching the plant-based meat market.

"Plant-based protein is something we're keeping an eye on as we start to think about the opportunities there and growth in that space," Lucy Brady, McDonald's senior vice-president of corporate strategy, told a [women's conference](#) in California hosted by Fortune magazine in December.

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An increasing number of large food and agricultural companies have been investing in alternative protein groups — US meat group Tyson Foods has taken a stake in plant based meat company Beyond Meat, leading agricultural trader Cargill has invested in cellular meat start-up Memphis Meats and [Unilever](#) bought a Dutch plant-based food company, Vegetarian Butcher.

The consumer trend described by food and marketing executives as a "paradigm shift" seems to be driven largely by concerns about health and weight loss, but Over the past four to five years, the spotlight on agriculture and food industries' impact on the environment has intensified amid fears over the prospect of population growth and food demand driving crop and livestock cultivation.

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Microbes are among the cutting-edge technologies in agriculture, where companies hope to cut the use of synthetic chemicals such as pesticides and fertilizers According to scientists, increased fertilizer use over the past 50 years is linked to a dramatic rise in atmospheric nitrous oxide, a leading greenhouse gas contributing to global climate change.

Read full, original article: [Concerns intensify over food producers' impact on environment](#) (Behind Paywall)