

Podcast: Should you eat 'fake meat'? Geneticist Chana Davis breaks down the GMO Impossible Burger controversy

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Chana Davis

The Impossible Burger has [exploded in popularity](#) across the US, with grocery stores and popular fast-food chains like Burger King struggling to keep up with demand for the plant-based beef alternative. But how is the Impossible Burger made, and why has it proved to be so controversial?

Part of the answer has to do with Impossible's key ingredient. This meat-free burger so closely emulates the taste and texture of beef thanks to a protein derived from GMO soy [called leghemoglobin](#). Anti-biotech activist groups, most recently the [Center for Food Safety](#), have questioned the safety and even legality of the technology used to produce the Impossible Burger, though most experts don't see the meat substitute as a threat to human health, and the FDA [has approved](#) it for sale in both retail stores and restaurants.

On this episode of Talking Biotech, geneticist Chana Davis joins University of Florida plant scientist Kevin Folta to discuss the controversy surrounding meat alternatives, processed food, and whether or not the Impossible Burger is really a vegetarian alternative to meat. Davis and Folta also explore an intriguing question about the future of food: will everything we eat someday be designed in a lab and mass produced?

<https://geneticliteracyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/211-Chana.mp3>

Chana Davis is a Stanford-trained geneticist and science writer. Visit her website, [Fueled By Science](#), and follow her on Twitter [@fueledbyscience](#).

Kevin M. Folta is a professor in the Horticultural Sciences Department at the University of Florida. Follow professor Folta on Twitter [@kevinfolta](#) and email your questions to kfolta@ufl.edu

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