

Can we prevent another pandemic with lab-grown, plant-based meat?

In September 2019—two months before the first reported case of the coronavirus—the World Health Organization published a report that said, “...there is a very real threat of a rapidly moving, highly lethal pandemic of a respiratory pathogen killing 50 to 80 million people and wiping out nearly 5 percent of the world’s economy... The world is not prepared.”

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So what would it take to minimize the risk of another virus like SARS-CoV-2 from ravaging the world?

It is recognized that close contact between humans and food animals have resulted in the transmission of many microbes from animals to humans, with SARS and avian influenza being two primary examples.

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In [a Facebook Live podcast I hosted in March with Ryan Bethencourt](#), the founder of [Wild Earth](#) and [IndieBio](#), Ryan predicted that “the majority of U.S. beef and dairy farms will be gone by 2035 because of advancements in agriculture.” Ryan cited [a report from a think tank](#) According to the report, the production of biology-based proteins via fermentation will be 10 times cheaper than any other animal based protein by 2035. Using programmable biology, researchers can use fermentation to produce proteins that mimic the exact taste and texture of the meat, at a fraction of the costs.

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