

Impossible Foods says plant-based meat can ‘disrupt’ animal agriculture without displacing farmers

The plant-based meat industry will need the millions of workers now employed in animal agriculture, the founder of Impossible Foods said [in mid May], but the slaughter room has to go.

Impossible CEO Patrick Brown described the slaughter-room as a feces-ridden public health hazard, but he said the rest of the machinery and labor that produces meat can be repurposed.

“Everything downstream of there, actually, a lot of it can be repurposed. If you work at an animal-based meat counter, and what goes into that counter is plant-based, we still need you,” Brown said.

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The animal-meat industry is a “sitting duck” for disruption, Brown said in the webinar hosted by the University of Chicago’s Rustandy Center for Social Sector Innovation, because it depends on an “inefficient prehistoric technology”—the slaughter of animals—“that hasn’t improved in millennia.”

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“Most of the ingredients in our products come from farms, so those jobs, we are going to need farmers no matter what the products are,” he said, but that’s not the primary concern for farmers. “Most farmers’ wealth,” he said, “is in their land.”

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