

Will biotechnology roil religious dietary laws? Cell-based meats raise prickly questions among Muslims about how to apply halal guidelines

[I]s cell-based meat halal? In the below interview, we ask [CellAgri founder Ahmed Khan] a whole slew of questions around the topic.

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GQ: Can cellular agriculture meat be halal? Isn't it halal by definition because there is no slaughter?

AK: I believe cellular agriculture meat can definitely be halal. Generally, there are two thought processes when it comes to how cell-based meat is made halal:

1. As no animal slaughter is involved, the meat should be considered halal (or kosher) by definition.
2. The more traditional position is that, in order to be considered halal, the stem cell lines for cell-based meat need to be extracted from an animal that is slaughtered in the specific halal manner. This is likely to be the position adopted by the majority of Muslims.

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While the cellular agriculture field would like the idea that cell-based meat could fit into the definitions of both kosher and halal without requiring to develop novel stem cell lines from a harvested animal, it may be difficult to get the majority of both consumers and halal certification players on board without doing so.

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