

Pork is central to China's culture and cuisine. It's also under dire threat from swine fever. Here's how lab-grown meat could rescue this iconic food

Pork is big business in China, the only country in the world to have its own [dedicated pork reserve](#). The government can tap into this reserve as pork prices shoot up or down, as they [currently are](#) amid another outbreak of African swine fever.

There is no treatment or vaccine for [the disease](#), and severe price and production problems could persistently plague the Chinese pork industry without more long-term solutions.

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One unorthodox solution to tackle current and future crises would be to grow meat from real animal cells. This technology, called [cultivated meat](#), would bolster the domestic pork industry and enable China to produce more pork in a way that is resilient to disease outbreaks and environmentally sustainable.

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To put the current Chinese pork system in perspective, the carbon footprint of slaughtering hundreds of millions of pigs a year – the largest pig herd in the world by far – is equivalent to about a third of the global aviation industry's emissions from 2018.

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A fully developed cultivated pork industry would mean less volatile prices in the market, and as an added benefit it would require less land use and have far fewer [greenhouse gas emissions](#).

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