

## Learning from the GMO stigmatization debacle: Why we shouldn't call cell-based protein 'lab meat'

As the rise of nontraditional meat accelerates, the Agriculture Department is [seeking input](#) on names for these novel foods “that would be neither false nor misleading.” This question is particularly important for cellular agriculture; unlike plant-based meat analogues, meat produced from cells in a growth medium is biological animal tissue, just produced differently from conventional animal meat.

And as the case of so-called genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, shows, linguistic missteps as a technology emerges can cause long-term problems with regulatory clarity and public trust.

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No one has taken these debates more seriously than incumbent meat producers, who have launched legal efforts, often backed by supportive politicians, in a number of [states](#) and [federally](#) to restrict the use of terms like meat and beef and chicken to the corpses of animals. (Most recently, the U.S. Cattlemen’s Association [petitioned](#) the USDA to prevent products of cellular agriculture from being labeled “meat”; its petition was [denied](#).)

This matters because alternative protein companies’ success in the market depends on consumer uptake, which could be affected by being unable to call the products meat—or, worse, if they are branded with a prejudicial prefix like “fake” or “imitation.”

**[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)**