

Viewpoint: The messy details of how lab-grown meat is made

Lab meat—flesh grown in massive tanks instead of in the bodies of sentient animals—offers the promise of having our steak and eating it guilt-free, too.

No vast amounts of [water-polluting](#) chemicals to grow feed crops; no [low-paid](#), oft-injured slaughterhouse workers; no climate-warming gases from [cow burps](#) or [manure lagoons](#), and no [billions of animals](#) slaughtered each year to satisfy our carnivory.

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Yet several obstacles hold back a new era of widely available animal-free burgers, nuggets, and carnitas. The biggest involves something much less appetizing than chicken dumplings: the blood of unborn cow fetuses, extracted from their mothers after slaughter, [called fetal bovine serum].

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The first is expense. FBS [sells](#) for upward of \$1,000 per liter—a major reason why, to break even on expenses, companies would have to sell their cultured meat for about [\\$200,000 per pound](#).

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The other big problem is optics: You can’t market your product as “slaughter-free,” let alone vegan, when you used a slaughterhouse byproduct to grow it... As a result, cultivated-meat companies are scrambling to find FBS substitutes. Such a “serum-free” growth medium exists, [reports](#) the Good Food Institute, a think tank that supports conventional-meat replacements. Trouble is, it currently costs nearly \$400 per liter—still way too high to be commercially competitive.

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