How algae could make meat and seafood accessible daily dishes

Technologies for cultivating alternative proteins have been around for years, but they have been far too costly to bring a lab-grown steak or seafood dish to your supermarket freezer.

Daniel Einhorn, Mermade's CEO, revealed that the company uses algae to slash the price of the nutrient-rich slurry, or growth medium, in which cells are grown. This could be a game changer because growth media have made alternative proteins prohibitively expensive.

"It's an up to 10,000-fold potential reduction in cost," Einhorn told the online audience at OurCrowd's 'Investing in the Circular Economy: From Trash to Cash.' "Any tiny dent that you put in by lowering the amount of new medium that you need creates a very significant difference in cost."

In a two-pronged recovery process, Mermade harvests algae that is fed the waste expelled by the cells, then recycles the algae to make the slurry.

While other companies discard that cell waste, "we feed it to algae," he said. "We grow algae on that cell waste, and that algae that grows is now a new source of nutrition for the cells."

The company's first product will be scallops, but Mermade expects to expand to other foods over time. "We're making the same seafood that we all know and love, just without fishing," Einhorn said.

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