Will China’s latest Five Year Plan jump start food made with synthetic biology?

In 2021, China’s 14th five-year plan announced the importance of securing protein supply through cellular agriculture and synthetic dairy. It was the government’s first acknowledgement of these novel production methods to deliver and diversify protein.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other ‘disruptive’ innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.
SIGN UP

Today, novel ingredients in China have a long approval process. China defines novel foods as foods and ingredients that do not have a recorded history of safe consumption in at least one province for 30 years... For example, getting approval for protein concentrates from plant sources can take between two and three years.

In comparison, UK and EU average 17 months; Japan takes a year or more; whereas Australia has a tiered approval system where all approval procedures take a year or less.

Solutions involving genetically modified microorganisms (GMM) are even more complicated. [Wilfred Feng remarked,] “Today the regulators’ attitude for GMM in products is still stubbornly cautious. If we’re serious about applying biotechnology to diversify food and feed, we can’t avoid GMM.”

…

Complex and timely approval processes are a costly burden especially for early-stage companies. Time will tell whether the regulations in China will become friendlier to protein innovations.

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here