Regulating lab meat: While the European Union drags its feet, Singapore and the US develop regulatory models for assessments and approvals

Both the US and Singapore have seen cultivated meat products pass through their regulatory processes, yet the two governments approach novel foods in different ways. Which challenges and opportunities exist within these regulatory frameworks, and what impact could they have on Europe?

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Singapore has proved itself a trailblazer across the global cell-based meat regulatory landscape, with Eat Just's cultivated chicken bites approved for sale in 2020, and multiple chicken-based products – including a whole chicken breast – in 2021. The same company had its serum-free media approved in Singapore last month.

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In the US, no cultivated meat products are currently on the market. UPSIDE Foods, which recently completely its pre-market safety review for a cultivated chicken product, must obtain a grant of inspection from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for its facility in Emeryville, CA, as well as a mark of inspection and label approval.

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Now that the US is on its way to being the second country to put cultivated meat on people's plates, economic competition might soon come into play. The US is a big market, and [Madeline] Cohen suspects it might prompt Europe and others to 'move a bit faster' with their regulatory processes.

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