

Forbidden meatball: Genetically-engineered wooly mammoth meat illustrates future of food

Australian cultured meat company Vow unveiled a meatball made of wooly mammoth meat and grown entirely in a lab. But there's a catch—no one can eat it just yet.

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Vow used existing information about the genetic sequencing of a mammoth, which included a key protein that gives the [meat its taste](#), and filled in the blanks based on data from similar species (like the African elephant). The company then inserted those genes into sheep cells, and let the cells multiply until they reached a meatball-sized amount.

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"Normally, we would taste our products and play around with them. But we were hesitant to immediately try and taste because we're talking about a protein that hasn't existed for 5,000 years," James Ryall, the chief scientific officer at Vow, [told CNN Tuesday](#). "It's not going to go up for sale, because we've got no idea about the safety profile of this particular product."

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So, if the meatball isn't going to make it into restaurant menus or supermarkets, why bother creating them? Vow says there's a broader message behind creating a mammoth meatball: to invest in the future of food.

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