Viewpoint: Plant-based meats are too expensive for consumers to seriously consider

We need to transform our food systems in the next few decades. In most countries, meat consumption is still growing. Globally, it’s growing quickly.

I think price is one (of several) explanations for this. Meat substitutes are still too expensive.

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There are two options to change the price differential: make meat more expensive, or meat substitutes cheaper.

On the former, governments could implement a ‘meat tax’. The point of that being that the total cost of meat – in terms of its environmental and social costs – is not reflected in the market price. A tax would try to capture at least some of these ‘externalities’. Seems rational, but would be a bold step for a government to take.

The latter is harder to comment on without good cost breakdowns for meat substitutes. What costs so much: the ingredients, the energy for processing, is it a problem of scale? Some meat substitutes seem like they should be relatively cheap to make: we’re not talking about lab-grown meat here, we’re talking about turning pea, soy, or wheat protein into a patty. Maybe I’m underestimating the costs involved: a full breakdown would be useful to see which levers can be pulled to get them down.

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here