‘Gastronomic dreams of astronomical proportions’: Collaboration between government and companies key to producing cell-based meat at scale

Creating a technological (and delicious) wonder is one thing; scaling it to feed billions of people is another. Right now, governments globally have invested $1 billion into developing cellular and plant-based meats, according to the Good Food Institute. It’s a start, but it’s not enough. To get cellular agriculture over the finish line and onto people’s plates, governments and corporations need to innovate and approach cultivated meat as the essential technology it is, rather than just a new food trend. Cellular technology must be accelerated with the same urgency with which we treat renewable energy in order for it to scale and make a dent in carbon emissions.

To do that, collaboration will be key. Working together, stakeholders in the cell-cultivated meat space can make the best use of public funding for emerging technologies. Consortiums — collaborative associations of private companies, governments, and institutions like universities and NGOs — have previously helped lead scientific breakthroughs in things like lifesaving vaccines and space exploration. They’ve also played no small part in getting computers to where they are today.

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The US is in the mix to develop better cellular agriculture technologies, and the recent success of startups like Upside Foods and Good Meat is a promising sign. Relative to the consortium-based efforts in other countries, though, the US is lagging.

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