

# AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS

Not yet on grocery shelves, lab-grown meat products already are the subject of new laws that require labeling, limit purchasing and sales

by Rebecca Leis ([rleis@csg.org](mailto:rleis@csg.org))

In summer 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service gave the go-ahead for sales of two California startups' cell-cultured chicken.

It marked the first-ever such approval by the federal agency. Later that year, for a brief period, this lab-grown meat was part of the menu at two U.S. restaurants.

Derived from the muscle tissue cells of a live animal, cell-cultured meat is grown in laboratories. The meat cells are cultivated in large vats, says Josephine Wee, a professor of food science at Penn State University, at facilities that resemble a brewery.

The process is expensive, Wee notes, but for several reasons, investors see potential in these lab-grown food products as a viable, alternative source of protein over the long term.

First, many anticipate that cell-cultured meat could be produced more sustainably than farm-raised meat. Second, the ability to produce cell-cultured meat provides a measure of food resilience in case of a disaster (such as a pandemic that impacts livestock).

Lastly, a rise in global population and income levels could mean a greater need and demand for meat products. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that by 2032, global consumption of meat proteins will be 13 percent higher compared to levels at the beginning of this decade.

The two California startups' production of cell-cultured chicken lasted just a few months, and their product never made it to grocery store shelves.

Nonetheless, recent developments in cell-cultured meat production have provoked action in state capitals. In the Midwest, the response mostly has been the consideration of new labeling rules, or restrictions on state or local purchasing of lab-grown meat. Outside this region, the first-ever statutory bans on cell-cultured meat sales and production were passed in 2024: SB 1084 in Florida and SB 23 in Alabama.

## 'DON'T CALL IT A PORK CHOP'

Iowa is the first Midwestern state to restrict sales of cell-cultured meat, as part of a 2024 law that also includes new labeling requirements for various types of "manufactured-protein food products." (Iowa's

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— Rep. Roy Klopfenstein, sponsor of introduced bill in Ohio

definition of these products also includes plant proteins that "resemble a type of tissue found in a species of agricultural food animal.")

Under Iowa's SF 2391, signed into law in May, a "meat term" (chicken, drumstick, steak, burger, etc.) cannot appear on one of these products' packaging label unless it is accompanied by a "conspicuous and prominent qualifying term" (cell-cultured, lab-grown, fabricated, plant-based, etc.).

Any "misbranded" product cannot be sold in Iowa.

SF 2391 also prohibits schools, community colleges and Iowa's university system from purchasing lab-grown meats (statutorily described as "cultivated-protein food products"), regardless of whether they have been labeled properly or not.

Lastly, legislators included a triggering provision: If the USDA approves the use of lab-grown meats in federal nutrition programs, the state must seek a waiver to exclude these products from program eligibility.

A similar measure that bans misbranded products, restricts schools and local governments from purchasing cell-cultured meats, and contains a triggering provision was considered in Ohio.

"We don't like the idea of [the products] using the words that go with real meat or real eggs; if people aren't aware of it, they're deceived," says Ohio Rep. Roy Klopfenstein a sponsor of last year's HB 661.

According to Rep. Jack Daniels, the other primary sponsor of HB 661, the agricultural sector has for many years successfully marketed meat with logos and names associated with farm-raised animals. A different type of food, Daniels and Klopfenstein say, should not be able to use those same logos and names.

"If you want to make a product that emulates a good pork chop, that's fine, but don't call it a pork chop," Klopfenstein adds.

Under HB 661, "misbranding" by food processing facilities would result in a fine of up to \$10,000 per day.

Daniels points out that HB 661 does not outright ban cell-cultured meat, a move that he says would conflict with free-market principles.

Blanket prohibitions also expose states to litigation. UPSIDE Foods, one of the California startups and a producer of cell-cultured meats, has filed a lawsuit against Florida.

## PROCUREMENT POWERS

In Nebraska, citing his powers under the State Procurement Act, Gov. Jim Pillen signed an executive order in August 2024

(24-09) prohibiting state agencies from purchasing "lab-grown meat" and delineating that state contractors shall not "discriminate against natural-meat producers in favor of laboratory or cultivated-meat producers."

Pillen's rationale for the executive order was twofold: 1) protect an animal agriculture industry that is "vital to Nebraska's economy"; and 2) avoid confusion among consumers.

Pillen also is asking legislators to pass a bill banning the sale of lab-grown meat in Nebraska.

To date, no states in the Midwest have enacted outright bans like the new laws in Alabama and Florida.

Instead, in the seven years since the USDA and U.S. Food and Drug Administration began coordinating regulation of cell-cultured meat production, at least four states in the Midwest — Iowa this year, and North Dakota, South Dakota and Kansas in previous legislative sessions — updated food labeling requirements.

At the federal level, the proposed (not passed by the close of 2024) Fair and Accurate Ingredient Representation on Labels Act aimed to boost transparency in the labeling of plant-protein and cell-cultured protein products. A separate measure would have banned cell-cultured meat from being served in schools.

## 'ALTERNATIVE' IDEA IN ILLINOIS

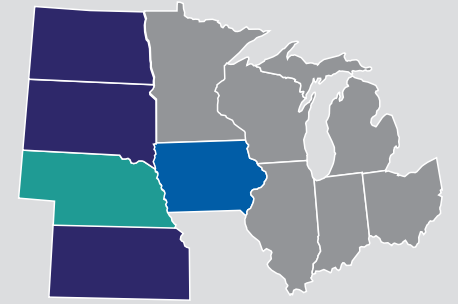
Much of the state activity reflects a wariness about cell-cultured meats. But at least one Midwestern state, Illinois, is taking a different approach. Legislators there established the Alternative Protein Innovation Task Force (HB 3710 and HB 4261).

"By promoting the expansion of alternative protein sources, we can ensure food security across our communities, ease harmful environmental effects and support our state's economy," Illinois Sen. Mattie Hunter, a sponsor of the legislation creating the task force, said after being named one of the group's co-chairs.

The Illinois law identifies for study three alternatives to farm-grown meats: "cultivated meat" (lab-grown), "fermented protein," and "plant-based protein." The task force's findings are due to the legislature in June.

Rebecca Leis is CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee. During the 2023-'24 biennium, Saskatchewan MLA Steven Bonk and Kansas Sen. Marci Francisco served as committee co-chairs and North Dakota Rep. Paul Thomas was the vice chair.

## REGULATION OF CELL-CULTURED MEAT PRODUCTS (AS OF NOVEMBER 2024)



- Governor's executive order prohibits state agencies from purchasing products
- Law enacted to restrict certain state/local entities from purchasing products and to establish labeling requirements
- Law enacted to establish labeling requirements and/or exclude products from definition of meat
- Bills introduced; no laws enacted on labeling or purchasing

## U.S. RANKINGS ON MEAT PRODUCTION IN 2023 (# OF POUNDS PRODUCED IN PARENTHESES)

State	Red meat	Chicken	Turkey
Illinois	#5 (3.2 billion)	*	*
Indiana	#10 (1.9 billion)	*	#3 (834 million)
Iowa	#1 (9.0 billion)	*	#5 (508 million)
Kansas	#3 (5.8 billion)	*	*
Michigan	#14 (1.3 billion)	*	#10 (220 million)
Minnesota	#7 (2.9 billion)	#18 (393 million)	#2 (1.1 million)
Nebraska	#2 (7.6 billion)	*	*
North Dakota	#39 (8.3 million)	*	*
Ohio	#23 (291 million)	#16 (573 million)	#8 (291 million)
South Dakota	#12 (1.4 billion)	*	#12 (142 million)
Wisconsin	#16 (1.2 billion)	#20 (238 million)	*

\* Not a significant amount of production in the state

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service

## #S ON ANIMAL AGRICULTURE AND FUTURE GLOBAL MEAT CONSUMPTION

39.4%

11-STATE MIDWEST'S SHARE OF TOTAL U.S. CASH RECEIPTS FOR ANIMAL AND ANIMAL PRODUCT COMMODITIES

+16%

ESTIMATED INCREASE IN GLOBAL POULTRY CONSUMPTION BY 2033 (using averages from 2021 to 2023 as baseline)

+8%

ESTIMATED INCREASE IN GLOBAL PORK CONSUMPTION BY 2033 (using averages from 2021 to 2023 as baseline)

+11%

ESTIMATED INCREASE IN GLOBAL BEEF CONSUMPTION BY 2033 (using averages from 2021 to 2023 as baseline)

