

April 6th, 2018

Matthew Michael & Mary Porretta
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3700

In opposition to Petition 18-01

Dear Mr. Michael and Ms. Porretta,

Unlike the minions whose letters to you are derived from this form: (<https://tinylink.net/Xy87q>), I am a conscious consumer who, like most people, enjoys the health, abundance, and convenience that food innovations of the past have given us. I'm grateful for processes like pasteurization, selective breeding, and the mechanical harvester, without which our food today would be less safe, less healthy, less tasty, and less plentiful.

In their letters, supporters of Petition 18-01 write, "the definitions of 'beef' and 'meat' should be limited to animals born, raised, and processed in the traditional manner." But, to quote Doug Stomboke of the South Dakota Farmers Union in his particular letter, the livestock industry has been "active in advancing genetics, feed efficiency and sustainability," and, therefore, does not shy away from improving upon traditional ways of raising meat. As Mr. Stomboke pointed out through his glorification of progress: maintaining current production methods isn't always desirable.

Mr. Michael and Ms. Porretta, if a new product name had been required every time we made a historic food innovation that we now enjoy, it would have caused confusion and could have prevented many of those innovations from taking off. Since the industrial revolution, we have found new ways to produce ice cream, condiments, milk, bread, fast food chicken nuggets -- the list goes on. But as these products serve the original function, it is only clear to consumers to call them by their true names. Clean meat, in particular, not only serves the same function -- it is, on a scientific and microscopic level, *meat*.

I truly empathize with people who work in the livestock industry. They are concerned about the toll that new meat products may take on their livelihoods. But to raise this battle of semantics in an attempt to undermine a new sector of growth is counterproductive. I look to the foresight of global meat industry giant Tyson, who recently invested in clean meat startup Memphis Meats. Where others in the industry panic, Tyson sees potential.

I want to voice my opposition to Petition 18-01, which would require "beef" and "meat" to be produced a way that may, one day, be considered outdated and obsolete. In a country whose innovations have helped to feed the entire world, the petition stifles innovation for the sake of maintaining a status quo. The industry supporters of the petition want only enough innovation (but no more) to maintain their way of life at a massive expense to the environment, human health, and animal welfare.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Best regards,



Dan Lipsitz

P.S. Below, I have chosen to specifically respond to the letter by Mr. Nathan Griffith of *Sheep! Magazine*.

April 6th, 2018

Dear Mr. Nathan Griffith,

Thank you for your clearly deep and passionate knowledge of the livestock industry. I appreciated the itemized objections in your letter regarding Petition 18-01 and I hope that you'll hear out my counter-arguments with an open mind.

From Objection 1: "Laboratory-cultured, meat-derived, protein products contain no bone matter, no connective tissue, no cartilage, no random flecks of fat (commonly called "marbling"), nor natural colors of real meat, which inform and assist consumers in choosing, cooking or discarding meat."

Considering that the primary clean meat products that are close to public availability are 1) ground beef and 2) chicken nuggets, I hope you are right that neither of them contain bone matter or cartilage. You might acknowledge many of the processed meat products (not clean meat) out there that don't have natural colors, like most meat from fast food restaurants. Would you consider those to not be "meat"? One of the great benefits and efficiencies of clean meat will be its consistency, that is, consumers will not need to choose or discard meat. It will all be safe for consumption.

From Objection 2: "To allow lab-grown protoplasm materials to be labeled "meats" is in essence government-assisted fraud on unsuspecting consumers, specially those of long established religions, which want it killed humanely and/or b exsanguination, as current USDA rules provide."

*Speaking from my Jewish upbringing: Considering that the production of clean meat does not require the slaughter of an animal, it is impossible to slaughter clean meat in a way that violates the teachings of the Torah. Foods that seek to appeal to Kosher and Halal populations use a certification logo, so I presume clean meats would follow the same procedure. Even the idea of Kosher pork via clean meat has been making the rounds:
http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2014/09/lab_grown_meat_is_it_kosher.html*

From Objection 3: "If FSIS gives its imprimatur to corporate interests behind the misleading ("clean meat") labeling claim, it would open up FSIS to endless litigation, paralyzing its needed public protection activity. Those corporate interests aren't necessarily so intent on improving diets as the are on paying shareholder dividends."

None of the approximately one dozen clean meat startups is a corporation, and not one of them has gone public, so they don't have shareholders to whom they pay dividends. Therefore, they don't have interests in paying shareholders.

The "corporation" who researched and decided upon the name "clean meat" is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit who conducted research into the most marketable name for the product.

From Objection 3: "For example, suppose an extremely difficult-to-detect prion disease like vCJD ("Mad Cow") were to develop within the "clean" lab-grown meat supply and were sent out by the railcar-load to points unknown for ears before the mutation source could be identified. What then?"

If we are concerned with the spreading of Mad Cow disease (a very real threat) then I think the first thing we would want to do is to produce our meat in the most safe, controlled environment possible. Unlike a pasture, clean meat factories will be sterile. There will be no cows to eat contaminated feed, no fecal contamination, and no e coli, so clean meat factories will be just as safe as any of the many sterile factories we already use to produce much of our food.

Thanks for engaging in a productive dialogue on this important issue.

Best,
Dan Lipsitz