

# No Mystery: It's Not Meat, But Taste Is Kinda Close

Mistress Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?

With veggie burgers and soybean steaks 'cause real meat has to go!

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**D**emand for meat worldwide is expected to double by 2050 according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

“With modern meat production requiring a third of the world’s land and water, there simply aren’t enough resources on the planet to meet that demand,” says David Kay of Memphis Meats, a producer of edible cellular meat, quoted in *Food Processing* magazine. Cellular-grown meat, which bypasses the usual growing, feeding and processing of animals, is one of two alternatives to meet the anticipated demand.

## Plant-Based Substitutes

The other is plant-based meat substitutes. It’s been some three years since Beyond Meat launched its veggie burger, but plant-based “meat” really began to draw national attention a little over a year ago when Burger King introduced Impossible Foods’ soybean-based Impossible Burger.

(Since Impossible’s introduction, Beyond Burger has reformulated its product to improve taste, texture and similarity to ground beef, *Food Processing* reports.)

Cellular-grown meat is still in its infancy, although with a possibly significant future with meat-loving consumers. But plant-based substitutes by the two pioneers, and more recently by some major food producers, are now widely accepted. Tyson Foods and Maple Leaf Foods (Lightlife® brand) are already in the market. Hormel Foods introduced Happy Little Plants® late last year.

Health, animal welfare and sustainability concerns have led to a decline in meat consumption in the U.S.

## ‘Meat and Produce Flipped’

“Ten years ago, your produce departments did 7% of store sales and your meat departments 17%” John Catsimatidis, CEO of Gristedes supermarkets, told *The New York Times*. “Now they have flipped. Produce and vegetables are way up there; meat products are way down.”

The International Food Information Council Foundation (*food insight.org*) in a survey of 1,000 U.S. adults found that while 66% of respondents said they eat meat, 49% said they’ve tried a plant alternative.

## Curiosity a Key Incentive

“Recently, a new generation of plant alternatives to animal meat has exploded on the food scene, distinguished from their predecessors by the intent to mimic animal meat’s taste and texture,” the study’s authors noted.

Of the third of respondents who identified as full- or part-time vegetarians, vegans and pescatarians, 72% or more had tried the new meat alternatives compared to 44% of omnivores (meat and vegetable eaters). Seventy-one pct. of respondents said their motives were “I like to try new foods” and “I was curious.”

Multiple answers were allowed, so concern for the environment and animal welfare were cited by 106% of respondents. Health concerns were cited by 24%. “I saw it on the menu” was the reason 17% reported.

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