

OUR VIEW

Meat still is what’s for dinner

Fads come and go. Just ask the makers of Rubik’s Cubes, Pet Rocks and Beanie Babies.

Consumers have always had a weakness for the next “new thing.” When they see or hear about it they want to buy it and try it.

The same can be said for food fads. Anyone who was around in the 1960s remembers Tang, the powdered orange drink developed for the astronauts. A whole generation of kids chugged gallons of the bright orange drink with the notion they, too, could travel to outer space.

Other fads are usually related to diets — the Atkins Diet, Mediterranean Diet, South Beach Diet, high-protein diets, low-protein diets, the keto diet and, our personal favorite, the water diet.

Most of these fads are connected to large advertising campaigns, usually to sell a book or a program.

A fad that has emerged lately involves meat that isn’t. A couple of companies have been selling burgers and other non-meats that are either “impossible” or “beyond.” They do it through massive advertising and marketing campaigns.

Beyond Meat, for example, says it gets about 4 billion media impressions a year. That includes advertising, print and online stories, social media and blogs. Film star Leonardo DiCaprio became its brand ambassador. A video about the meatless “meat” got more than 8.5 million views.

Another video of the company headquarters generated 23 million views on Facebook in three weeks, according to the company’s Securities and Exchange Commission filings.

Even if a person was not impressed by the company’s product, its advertising and marketing efforts are impressive. As long as it can keep consumers interested, it will survive.

However, consumers have short attention spans. While they may buy lots of non-meat burgers now, will they do it into the foreseeable future?

Only the market will tell.

In the meantime, real meat has been around since Fred and Barney were riding around on dinosaurs. Even before agriculture first took hold in the Middle East some 12,000 years ago, men and women were cooking the day’s meal over a fire. And, as often as possible, it included meat.

Real meat — beef, pork, chicken, lamb, goat, bison, yak ... you name it — will be around forever. Of that we have no doubt.

But we do have something we’d like to see: more branded advertising and marketing of meat. If a company can get 4 billion hits promoting an aggregation of pea protein, coconut oil and beet juice — among other ingredients — promotions of real meat should be able to do far better. After all, the vast majority of people around the world eat meat.

That’s something fake meat makers will never be able to say.



Pete Buttigieg’s bad immigration idea

Pete Buttigieg, one of the surviving Democratic presidential candidates, goes from up to down to sideways in his pursuit of the elusive 2020 nomination. The former South Bend mayor was up in Merrimack, New Hampshire but is struggling in South Carolina and Nevada.

When candidates are trying to separate themselves from the pack, they’ll throw out ideas — often half-baked — to see what might stick. During a stop in Merrimack, New Hampshire, Buttigieg provided a great example of concept-testing — in this case, a bad immigration proposal.

At an American Legion hall, Buttigieg suggested the federal government create a new visa to fast-track legal immigrants into communities that need to stimulate their population growth. Community renewal visas would, Buttigieg said, go “to those who are willing to be in those areas that maybe are hurting for population but have great potential.”

Buttigieg didn’t explain what would happen once those immigrants arrive. They’ll need to find increasingly scarce jobs, secure ever-more expensive housing, compete in overcrowded classrooms for educations, and access the other services that are synonymous with a relatively smooth transition into a new American lifestyle. Making those services available is costly, and the fiscal burden would fall in large part on the existing municipalities and their residents.

If history is our guide, the feds never



SYNDICATED COLUMNIST
JOE GUZZARDI

ask municipalities or residents their feelings about adding more foreign-born residents. For years, the federal refugee resettlement program sent refugees into cities without forewarning locals a new populous would soon be settling into their towns.

Merrimack is a curious place for Buttigieg to introduce his radical community renewal visa. Like most established communities, the majority of residents would oppose more traffic and sprawl, two guaranteed disruptive outcomes from relentless population growth. Developers, bankers and retail businesses, however, have a different viewpoint. More immigration means a bigger customer base, and therefore higher profits.

The mantra among Buttigieg and his Democratic rivals is that more immigration is unequivocally good, and must be presented in solidly positive terms. Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden, Amy Klobuchar and Buttigieg ignore Census Bureau projections that immigration-driven population growth will drive up our total population from 329 million to over 400 million by 2060.

Although Congress refuses to acknowledge the solution, reducing immigration by half would make a dramatic difference in the country’s future. Assuming the status quo remains unchanged, U.S. population will add 75

million people over the next 40 years. On the other hand, a 50% cut would mean that only 25 million people would be added, a much better outcome.

Congress has plenty of room to cut immigration. Roughly 2 million legal, illegal and temporary guest workers come to the U.S. each year. Not only is the country adversely affected by the impacts of such tremendous growth, but for U.S. workers, the economy suffers. Although the unemployment rate is a low 3.6%, there still are millions of American workers who want but cannot find full-time jobs. Immigration hurts job-seeking minority workers who don’t have a college education. Real wage growth remains where it’s been for decades — stagnant.

President Donald Trump also is a culprit in the steady erosion of Americans’ hopes for commonsense immigration. During Trump’s first two years in the White House, the average number of Green Cards issued has been higher than the average number of Green Cards issued annually during each of President Obama’s eight full years in office.

Immigration, Capitol Hill-style, helps the monied class. Other Americans, victims of endless growth, pay a heavy price. Buttigieg’s community renewal visa would be another step away from immigration policies that benefit Americans, and toward rewarding the wealthy.

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THE OBSERVER

An independent newspaper founded in 1896

(USPS 299-260)

Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, Oregon 97801. Published Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays (except Dec. 25) by EO Media Group, 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, OR 97850 (USPS 299-260)

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POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
The Observer, 1406 Fifth St.,
La Grande, OR 97850
Periodicals postage paid at:
Pendleton, Oregon 97801

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