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Opinion

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Our View

New name needed for laboratory meat

The USDA has a tough job ahead. It needs to come up with a moniker for meat that is grown in a laboratory. For want of a better word, the agency is calling it “cultured” meat, but it’s looking for suggestions from the public for a better name.

Unprompted, some of our Facebook friends offered their own suggestions: “Crap.” “Yuck.” “Disgusting.” “Lab-raised meat” was another more diplomatic suggestion.

Judging from these responses, finding a new name will not be easy.

Lab meat didn’t even exist a few years ago. It is produced by taking muscle cells from a cow — or hog or

chicken — and placing them in a petri dish or other container and feeding them. As the cells multiply, they grow in chains. Add some red coloring — lab meat tends to be gray — and grind it up and you have the makings of a hamburger.

Other than donating a few muscle cells, no animals are involved. The cells are fed in much the same way a scientist would grow a culture of bacteria.

It took two years and nearly \$300,000 to produce the first lab “burger,” according to Mark Post, a Dutch scientist who led the effort. In an interview, he estimated it would take 10 more years to get lab meat to market.

Other companies, including meat processors Tyson and Cargill, have also

joined the quest to bring lab meat to market. Some consultants believe that by 2040 most of the meat consumed will come from laboratories and not ranches or farms.

We’ll see about that. You’ll note that the one thing that doesn’t come up in these conversations is the price consumers will pay. Producers of plant-based fake “meat” have already faced some resistance to their prices.

That’s why USDA is trying to come up with a name for the laboratory-based meat. The new name needs to clearly indicate to consumers and others that this “meat” is entirely different from typical beef, pork or chicken.

That’s where some other products have stumbled, and confused consumers in the process. For example, the dust-up over calling beverages made

from soybeans or nuts “milk” could have been avoided if those companies had given some thought to a new name and not appropriated the dairy industry’s standard-bearer.

We’ve got an idea. Instead of trying to parade this new product as a facsimile of real beef, why not come up with an entirely new name?

How about Labster?

Or LaBurger?

Or unBurger?

Or the Substance Formerly Known as Meat?

Whatever the good people at USDA decide, the new name should not include beef, pork or chicken. They come from an entirely different place, and it’s not a laboratory.

Our View

When the state faces its own mandates

We have from the start advised those old enough and medically able to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus. We have also pressed employers to take reasonable steps to protect their employees, and that everyone take whatever steps they believe necessary to protect themselves.

We are firmly in the anti-COVID camp.

We have been critical of many government regulatory actions related to the pandemic, particularly those borne of sweeping emergency executive orders that have escaped legislative review.

Almost from the start, the state governors imposed strict rules on businesses and employers, and sent out regulators to force compliance.

The state of Oregon found out recently how hard it is to enforce its own mandates.

After a one-year hiatus, the Oregon State Fair returned this year with the theme “Fun makes a comeback.” Maybe a little too much fun, at least for some patrons.

Late last month, Gov. Kate Brown mandated that masks be worn in public settings, indoors and outdoors, at large gatherings such as the fair and the Pendleton Round-Up. The fair, a public corporation, is a government entity that operates under the authority of state statute. The fairgrounds and the facilities located on the grounds are owned by the state. The fair is patrolled by the

Oregon State Police.

Several news outlets reported that Oregon OSHA received at least a dozen complaints that mask rules were not enforced on the grounds. Photos posted on social media indicate widespread flouting of the governor’s rules.

“We are adding steps. Over the weekend, we talked with Oregon OSHA, and they will be visiting the fair on their time frame,” Oregon State Fair spokesperson Dave Thompson told KOIN.

“They will be looking specifically at the vendors and staff and the people we do have some control over and make sure they’re wearing masks. Vendors could be fined thousands of dollars.”

OSHA was sent to hold vendors to the rules, but not to make the fair enforce the rules on its patrons. Ejecting uncompliant fairgoers would have been hard, unpopular and not much fun.

Ag employers can empathize. They have, in effect, been turned into agents of the state. If they fail to comply with the rules, or are thwarted by uncooperative employees or customers, they can be heavily fined by the state.

In an ideal world, the experiences of an actual agent of the state with enforcing state diktats would inform regulators to the practical problems of compliance and ameliorate their attitudes toward good faith efforts put forth by the regulated.

Alas, the world is far from ideal.



Mask mandates also made a comeback at this year’s Oregon State Fair.

READERS’ VIEW

Carbon fees harm economy

“Wink, wink. Nudge, nudge.” It ain’t so.

A recent op-ed piece praising carbon fees and credits shows that the author really does not believe what she writes. At best, carbon fees “nudge” producers, harming the economy while having little or no effect on “climate change.”

This is politics at its worst, mere show, positions unsupported by evidence, which don’t begin to solve the false problems they purport to address while allowing advocates to display “virtue” and look morally superior.

Her logic and evidence are likewise defective. The new UN Report’s “code red” assertions outrun and are contrary to its evidence, which is that climate change is less likely (than the last UN Report).

Read, by a real expert, Steven Koonin’s 2021 “Unsettled: What climate science tells us, what it doesn’t, and why it matters.”

Likewise, the writer’s insinuation that climate change is causing extreme

weather events, is not supported by the evidence, including the UN Report. Three hot days in Oregon does not prove climate change. One swallow does not make a summer.

It is also economically illiterate to suggest to assert that such policies will be costless to poor and middle-class Americans. Taxes and fees are inevitably passed on to consumers.

Government, to enforce them, inevitably grows and grows (and costs). Indeed, as government grows, the administrative state imposes undemocratically ever more regulations, disincentives and costs.

Sadly, the writer is correct on one thing: much of this madness is bipartisan. Moderns lack respect for the golden goose of free market capitalism.

The Capital Press, issue after issue, case after case, shows the animus of the administrative state against producers: farmers, ranchers, and energy producers. The federal and state governments and agencies are engaged in warfare (lawfare) against producers. Ever-accumulating regulations kill business, especially farmers on short margins.

Unfortunately, uninformed voters elect, as in Portland, utopian politicians who believe that food comes from supermarkets, and energy from plugs, who don’t recognize that the energy revolution has transformed the world, and saved billions from poverty, starvation, war and slavery.

While still enjoying the benefits, they want to shut down farms, ranches, extractive industries and remove/prohibit dams, pipelines, transmission lines, refineries and all sources of energy (oil, gas, nuclear, hydro, coal).

A major American problem is the cancerous growth of the administrative state, of “experts” who rule in place of the people and their representatives, who tyrannically combine (against which Montesquieu warned) the three powers (legislative, executive, judiciary). Their “solutions” to “climate change” are “watermelon” solutions (green on the outside, red on the inside), which increasingly socialize and harm America and the West, while allowing China, India and other countries “their turn to pollute.”

Alan L. Gallagher
Canby, Ore.

The fight for Oregon’s future is here — please join us!

This last week, the Oregon Legislature released their proposals for redistricting in the state, and the stakes have never been higher. This redistricting process follows on the heels of the 2020 census and will be completed in a special session later this month.

While Oregon agriculture has strong friends in the Legislature on both sides of the aisle, the past several years of rule under the Democrat super majority has taken its toll on our farm and ranch families. Without the proper checks in the system, dozens of policies have passed that have increased costs for Oregon’s producers, with policies that benefit producers becoming increasingly more rare in Salem. As a non-partisan organization, the Oregon Farm Bureau works with both parties in Salem to achieve the best policy outcomes we can for Oregon producers.

The 2021 redistricting process has the potential to make that job exponentially harder. Rural voices were already diluted in the 2010 redistricting process. We cannot afford to allow partisanship to further reduce our voice in the Legislature. Countless farm and ranch families are barely hanging on. Adopting new districts that will disenfranchise farmers and ranchers and further encourage policies that only harm rural communities will be the last straw for many ag and rural families.

Each party has released its own proposals for redistricting. To put it plainly, the proposals put forward by the Democrat majority represent gerrymandering by every metric. Across the state, the Democrat proposal seeks to cement their super majority by ensuring that many rural parts of the state are likely to be represented by urban Democrats, diluting the voice of rural Oregon in shaping policy.

The Legislature is under a court-ordered deadline to complete redistricting by Sept. 27, or the task will fall to Secretary of State Shemia Fagan. The 2020 census data has shown Oregon is entitled to a 6th Congressional seat, and Oregon’s House and

GUEST VIEW
Angela Bailey



Senate boundaries will also need to be adjusted as Oregon’s population has shifted. The stakes have never been higher.

Oregonians across the state expect maps to be drawn fairly and in a compact manner, with communities of common interest like school districts and neighborhoods left intact. We must ensure that farm and ranch families are kept in districts where their voices are collectively strong and represented, not more dispersed by drawing them into districts with higher population density and different needs and perspectives.

The Oregon Farm Bureau was part of a broad coalition to run a ballot measure last year to ensure the Oregon had a truly independent redistricting commission. With COVID restrictions, that measure did not make it on the ballot, but we will continue to push for meaningful reform of Oregon’s redistricting process.

In the meantime, we need rural Oregon to show up and make your voice heard! There is still a chance to influence the process, and a strong turnout will both show the Legislature that rural Oregon is not going to be disenfranchised without a fight and increase the chances of successfully fighting indefensible boundaries in court. There are hearings taking place over the next two weeks, and you can write in before Sept. 21.

Who represents you in Salem has never been more important for the future of agriculture in Oregon. If you do anything this week, please find a way to make your voice heard and stand up for the rights of rural Oregon. Visit OregonFB.org/advocacy to take action on redistricting today!

Angela Bailey is president of the Oregon Farm Bureau and a fourth-generation farmer operating a nursery in Gresham that specializes in Japanese maples.

LETTERS POLICY

Write to us: Capital Press welcomes letters to the editor on issues of interest to farmers, ranchers and the agribusiness community. Letters policy: Please limit letters to 300 words and include your home address and a daytime telephone number with your submission. Longer pieces, 500-750 words, may be considered as guest commentary pieces for use on the opinion pages. Guest commentary submissions should also include a photograph of the author. Send letters via email to opinions@capitalpress.com. Emailed letters are preferred and require less time to process, which could result in quicker publication. Letters also may be sent to P.O. Box 2048, Salem, OR 97308.