

# 3<sup>RD</sup> GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY, FOOD SAFETY & SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

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## Cultured meat: An evolving terminology issue

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**Statement of the Problem:** Cultured meat technology is a fast evolving issue. In 2013 a first beef burger was taste tested thus proving that the concept around such a technology was becoming viable. Despite its initial prohibitive cost, the production of cultured meat in laboratories is now a fraction to what it was. Much of the justification behind such a technology has been based on the potential it has in helping address the likely food insecurity problems in the light of a growing world population, converging but changing food consumption habits and the detrimental impact it might have on the natural environment in the future. Despite this, the literature on the topic is still incipient. The debate has often focused around the justification for cultured meat as guaranteeing the supply of meat in the future. Yet, very little has been said about how it could effectively tackle hunger and malnutrition, especially from a nutrition point of view. The argument has been speculative and based on the possibility of such technology to reduce the negative effect livestock production has on the environment, reduce animal suffering and improve food nutrition. Some believe that in so doing, the future ubiquitous presence of cultured meat would help to finally disconnect the animal origin from the meat eater, thus opening the possibility for non-meat eaters based to change their eating habits. Nonetheless, since it is an evolving issue, some confusion exists around the terminology used. Therefore, clarification is urgent due to the existing plethora of terms referring to meat grown from an animal muscle tissue in a laboratory. Consumers tend to be sensitive to terminologies which might influence the adoption of products. Consequently, reducing the negative perception this new meat might have would be vital for managing future aversion and rejection by the general public. In the literature, many terms have been used quite freely with some initially referring to Figure 1. A mixed approach methodology used. Eight qualitative in-depth interviews with key stakeholders purposively identified representing different viewpoints were carried out. A survey was conducted with stakeholders of the red meat supply to test the best likely terminology to be adopted. It is expected that with such a clarification by bringing the product to market reducing the aversion of the technology might not be as problematic as expected. Nevertheless, other important questions still need to be asked regarding who such a technology might serve the rich or the poor? Should such a tasteless and structureless meat become the choice meat for food alleviation programs in the future?

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