

Israel moves ahead to establish itself as alternative protein leader

08 December 2020 | News

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Aleph Farms, a cultivated meat company and tried out its cultivated steak. The company grows real meat directly from cow cells under controlled conditions, using a fraction of the resources required for raising an entire animal for meat and without antibiotics.



Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu tastes cell-cultivated steak

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Aleph Farms, a cultivated meat company and tried out its cultivated steak. The company grows real meat directly from cow cells under controlled conditions, using a fraction of the resources required for raising an entire animal for meat and without antibiotics.

During the visit, the Prime Minister tasted Aleph's cultivated steak along with Nir Goldstein, Managing Director, The Good Food Institute Israel. Prior to the tasting meal, the Prime Minister accompanied by the government's animal rights advisor, Tal Gilboa, toured the facilities, receiving an overview on the production process and about the company's distinct sustainability vision. The visit also included a presentation by Goldstein and Didier Toubia, Co-Founder and CEO, Aleph Farms, who shared the organisation's National Policy Plan – detailed roadmap for making Israel the global alternative protein leader.

"It's delicious and guilt-free, I can't taste the difference," declared Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel. "I have directed the State Secretary Tzahi Braverman to appoint a body to serve these industries in order to connect and oversee all the stakeholders operating in this field. Israel will become a powerhouse for alternative meat and alternative protein."

Last week, Singapore made headway to concluding the world's first regulatory process that will bring cultivated meat to the market. This has transformed the cultivated meat movement from being a long-term vision into becoming a realised practical solution that addresses some of the world's most pressing challenges of our times.

COVID-19 and climate change have served to point out the sensitive nature of food systems and highlighted the urgency for establishing sustainable and resilient food systems. Like many other countries, Israel is facing food security challenges, having 85 percent of the locally consumed beef in fact imported, and not locally produced.

"The new national plan for alternative proteins involves six different ministries and capitalizes on Israel's unique capabilities," said Didier Toubia, Co-Founder and CEO of Aleph Farms. "The goal of implementing such national programs for food security is to provide unconditional and secure supplies of quality nutrition to anyone, anytime, anywhere. We feel lucky to be part of the local cultivated meat industry, which is working collaboratively to stimulate a global transition for the protein sector," added Toubia.

"Alternative protein production could prove to be a central economic growth engine for Israel," explained Goldstein. "With governmental support in this industry, we could enjoy 11,000 additional jobs that would earn the economy billions of dollars each year. Israel which currently exports only 5% of the food it produces, could become a global supplier of raw materials and advanced production technologies for alternative proteins. This can all become a reality, in part thanks to the governmental support thus far, but it also depends on government funding from here on of scientific research and development to turbo-charge alternative protein innovation," concluded Goldstein.

"The Israeli government has turned the country into a nerve center for plant-based and cultivated meat innovation," expressed Bruce Friedrich, Executive Director of The Good Food Institute. "Israel is creating a welcoming ecosystem for alternative protein innovation, and the Prime Minister being the first head of state to eat cultivated meat exemplifies this support and underlines the nation's commitment to the future of meat."