

## Israel's Forsea unveils first cultured eel

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Israel-based Cell-cultured seafood start-up Forsea Foods, Ltd. sails on its mission to save wild eel populations from near extinction by unveiling its prototype of cell-cultivated freshwater eel. Forsea successfully replicated the traditional Japanese unagi eel (*Anguilla japonica*) featuring the same tender, succulent texture and rich savoury flavour as a real eel.

The visionary start-up has been working with the celebrated executive chef Katsumi Kusumoto to create two popular traditional Japanese dishes – unagi kabayaki (marinated grilled eel over rice) and unagi nigiri. Kusumoto runs the vegan restaurant SAIDO in Tokyo, which was voted the world's best vegan restaurant in 2019 by the online vegan and vegetarian restaurant guide Happy Cow.

The company has achieved a working proof-of-concept that embodies the sensory attributes of real eel meat and is now prepped for scale-up. In the collaboration, Forsea contributes its novel technology for cell-cultivating eel cuts, while Kusumoto contributes his culinary mastery to refine the product to perfection in texture and flavour. Forsea won the Startup Pitch Hour Prize at the Asia-Pacific Agri-Food Innovation Summit last October in Singapore.

“Unagi is an enduring favourite in Japan,” informs Kusumoto. “Its timeless appeal, however, is impacted by a growing awareness among the Japanese population of the need to take a more sustainable approach. It’s been a thrilling journey to join forces with emerging innovators, and work together to deliver the traditional unagi indulgence with a clear eco-conscience.”