

# The Ethics of Synthetic Meat: A New Challenging Technology Under the Ethical Scrutiny - Abstract

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## Summary

The Ethics of synthetic meat is an emerging field in applied Ethics. As the world's population grows, stakeholders, scholars and manufacturers have begun to hypothesize new strategies to meet growing food needs and to prevent food production from having a deleterious environmental impact. Among the various strategies adopted, the creation of synthetic meat deserves special mention. This technology has aroused both hopes and fears among consumers and scholars involved in the agri-food sector and, lately, among moral philosophers.

In this contribution I will dedicate myself to focusing on the moral issues raised by the production and/or consumption of synthetic meat.

In the first part I will outline some moral arguments against synthetic meat.

First, I will dwell on the so-called repugnance argument according to which the reluctance regarding certain types of foods (or other things) should be taken as a moral indication about the permissibility of using such products.

Second, I will address the argument of naturalness according to which synthetic meat should be rejected because of its unnaturalness and because of the serious consequences it would have on the moral character of people who use it.

The third argument concerns the distraction of attention from the production of plant-based foods that would result from investing in synthetic meat. Investing in synthetic meat would make these other production lines lose ground.

Finally, I will consider an argument that I think is the biggest concern from a moral but also an economic point of view with respect to this product.

The large-scale introduction of synthetic meat will generate the loss of thousands of jobs, because of the reduction in the number of workers needed to carry on production and because of the increasing processes of automation that will include the introduction of 3D Printers and artificial intelligence.

In the second part of the contribution, I will try to provide counterarguments to show how none of the previous objections are able to provide robust moral reasons to hinder the production and consumption of synthetic meat and, on the contrary, I will focus on some arguments in favor of the consumption of synthetic meat.

In the concluding remarks, I will focus on two aspects: 1) that investment in a given technology should not lead us to overshadow the necessary moral transformations required for the structuring of less environmentally impactful lifestyles; 2) that when faced with far-reaching problems, it is always appropriate to adopt a multi-focus strategy, avoiding placing excessive hopes and expectations on a single technology but, at the same time, also avoiding underestimating the potential contributions that a given technology can offer us

## Keywords

ethics of synthetic meat, nonhuman animals, animal welfare, ecological impact, multifocal strategies

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