

Barking up the right tree: UK is European first to allow cultured 'meat' for pets

24 September 2024

Following on from our food and drink sector regulatory Summer 2023 update '[FSA-commissioned report puts forward new ideas for novel food approvals](#)', this year has seen a landmark regulatory development in the UK, establishing it as the first European country to approve lab-grown 'meat' for pet food.

This marks a significant step towards alternative protein sources in the industry. This approval, granted to **Meatly** for its cell-cultivated (currently not recognised as 'meat' under legislation) chicken product, opens new avenues for the meat industry to innovate and expand product lines.

While this approval currently extends only to pet food, with no cell-cultivated products authorised for human consumption in Great Britain, it signals a growing interest and potential for future regulatory advancements in food technology. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has pledged to ensure rigorous safety standards for these new products, emphasising the importance of consumer safety in the shift to more sustainable sources of protein.

The current process for authorising these products is for companies to apply via either assessment under the Novel Food Regulations (if there is no history of consumption in the UK or EU before 1997), or under the Genetically Modified Organism regulations (if organism's genetic material has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally). All products will undergo rigorous safety assessments prior to their authorisation for sale regardless of the regulatory framework for authorisation.

The decision to approve lab-grown 'meat' for pet food addresses both environmental concerns and the demand for sustainable food sources, offering a promising alternative to traditional meat production methods.

As the industry navigates this new landscape, companies are encouraged to stay up to date with regulatory updates and consider the implications of lab-grown 'meat' and other alternative proteins in their strategic planning. The FSA's commitment to monitoring and ensuring the safety of these products provides a solid foundation for companies looking to venture into this innovative space, looking towards a future where more sustainable food solutions become increasingly accessible and accepted.

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