



## Meat Planet: Artificial Flesh and the Future of Food

**Benjamin Aldes Wurgaft**

University of California Press (Sep 3, 2019)

Hardcover \$27.95 (264pp)

978-0-520-29553-7

Benjamin Aldes Wurgaft's *Meat Planet* is a thoughtful examination of the technological, ethical, and cultural issues swirling around the development of artificial flesh. It's a quick-witted, journalistic survey of lab-cultured meat—how it's made, financed, and branded. Overlaying this complex brew are nuanced ruminations about the future of food and problems with industrialized agriculture, like the spread of zoonotic disease, environmental damage, and antibiotic resistance.

Wurgaft, an ambivalent omnivore, probes many different perspectives. He visits the labs of “clean meat” boosters and “cornucopians” who believe technological advances can solve the world's problems, attends idea conferences learning about entomophagy and roadkill, and interviews “neoagrarians” and “artisanal foodies” who eschew “Frankenmeat.” These many viewpoints are rich and analyzed with sensitivity. Wurgaft's own interior debates about the ethics of carnivory, issues of global food security and sustainability, and the very definition and meaning of food are provocative.

Dense but never dry, abstract questions and large ideas are interspersed with lively and fascinating conversations with rabbis about whether artificial meat is kosher and with tissue engineers about the possibilities of replacing organs in humans and leather in fashions. Rarified subcultures of venture capitalism and futurism are also penetrated.

The book raises as many questions about meat and food as it answers. In his five years examining this specialized topic, Wurgaft has become a go-to expert for the media. His macro view of what artificial meat means to science, agriculture, anthropology, ecology, and philosophy is impressive and interdisciplinary.

Encouraging deep thinking around ingrained beliefs and eating habits, *Meat Planet* conjures up a range of options for the future. It is intellectually and ethically challenging material.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (September / October 2019)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*