

## Medical Writing Doesn't Have to Be Complicated.



Sometimes, I write about using stem cells to rebuild nerve tissue and other damaged parts of the body. This month, I got a chance to take things in a different direction by writing about stem cells used to grow beef and fish in the lab.

In this issue, I'll share a few insights from this recent work.

## Where the "New" Beef is Coming From



Image source: <http://virgin.smallpict.com/2013/12/15/wheresTheBeef.html>

Also known as “cultured” meat because the meat is grown from stem cell cultures, companies and research institutions in Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United

States are working feverishly to make lab-grown meat tasty and affordable for the masses. Some of the folks growing beef and fish in the lab believe these products offer a sustainable and humane option to conventionally farmed meat.

Since the internet is already flooded with interesting stories about these products, I'd like to share some background on cultured meat that landed on the cutting room floor (I'd also rather not give away my story!). These insights come courtesy of Kate Krueger, Ph.D., research director at New Harvest, a donor-funded research institute in New York City.

## Lab-Grown Meat: A Century-Old Concept

Lab-grown meat uses relatively new technology that falls under the umbrella of a field of science known as [cellular agriculture](#). Yet, despite its seemingly novel essence, the idea of growing meat in the laboratory is nothing new. Incredibly, Sir Winston Churchill introduced the concept in a 1931 essay he penned for *Strand Magazine*. However, the actual present-day science owes its roots to the “Godfather of Cultured Meat,” Dutch researcher and entrepreneur Willem van Eelem, who received a U.S. patent for his work in 1999.

Right now, lab-grown meat still runs on a little on the pricey side, but Krueger says that the cost of cultured meat is significantly cheaper than the cost of culturing tissues in the medical field. The price differential can be attributed to the fact that many technologies employed for medical use—such as those used in tissue transplants—require a much higher level of precision. Higher precision translates to higher cost.

“When you think of a food product like a steak, people have a lower price point and a lower tolerance for the price of precision,” Krueger says. “It's like the difference between using a surgeon's razor versus a kitchen knife.”

So, maybe some folks may be willing to give the meat a try—as long as the kitchen blade is sharp enough to slice open that ribeye.

## So... What's Next?

For my WebMD column in July, I talked about why it's a good idea to [let your pharmacist counsel you on your medications](#) and explained how to tell when [lotions and other personal care products expire](#). My article addressing some of major pain points suppliers and manufacturers face regarding [dietary supplements](#) also ran in this month.

Lastly, in addition to my current and upcoming projects, I'm pleased to announce that I am a Doximity 2019-2020 Op-Med Fellow. The fellows come from a variety of medical backgrounds, with the majority being physicians. As the only pharmacist on board, I am proud to represent my profession by creating content that highlights issues relevant not only to pharmacists but to all healthcare professionals across the

board.

Until then, stay tuned....



**Frieda Wiley, PharmD**  
**Freelance Medical and**  
**Science Writer**

[frieda@friedawiley.com](mailto:frieda@friedawiley.com)

(832) 781-1662



Get In Touch

[Portfolio](#)

[Meet Frieda](#)

[Expertise](#)