

PROGRESS REPORT:
**Community-Building
in an Age of Covid-19**

SEPTEMBER 2020



Accelerating the Growth and Impact of the Alternative Protein Sector





Maintaining momentum in a rapidly changing world

The events of 2020 have clearly demonstrated how profoundly we are connected: as individuals, as communities, and as a global family. The Covid-19 pandemic has also underscored the inherent fragility of the global food infrastructure and that working together to create a more sustainable and resilient system is more vital than ever.

In the four years since GFI's founding, the alternative protein sector has evolved more rapidly than we could ever have imagined. GFI's strategies and programs have evolved in parallel, in order to ensure that we deliver

maximum impact. Much of the work we do today is creating the pathway for even greater growth.

GFI is 100% powered by philanthropy, and in this Progress Report, we showcase three specific ways through which the support of our family of donors is helping create a new future of food that is sustainable, healthy, and just.



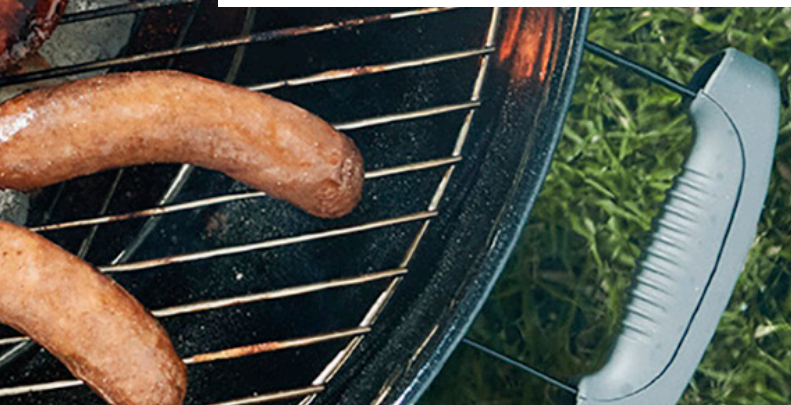
To learn more about how you can partner with us to create a better way to feed the world, please contact:



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Building the Alternative Protein Industry

Alternative proteins like **plant-based** and **cultivated** meat offer tremendous efficiency and sustainability benefits over conventional meat. But before we can expect consumers to change, we will have to transform our global food system, which will require massive shifts in infrastructure, supply chains, capital, and other resources.

The monumental complexity and scale of this transformation have inspired GFI to launch the Advancing Solutions Initiative.

Our Advancing Solutions analysis over the past seven months began

with a review of existing market-shaping strategies and decision analysis frameworks used in the agricultural and the public health sectors by organizations like USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

We then asked more than 120 experts across the alternative protein industry—including scientists, investors, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders—to identify the most significant bottlenecks in the industry, brainstorm high impact solutions, and quantitatively rate the relative impact of the proposed activities.

We consolidated the experts' contributions into two dynamic resources that will be continuously refined as the industry evolves: an Innovation Priorities page and a Solutions Database.

Our online Innovation Priorities page details key challenges limiting the growth of alternative proteins and solicits creative solutions that may not be readily apparent. Our Solutions Database includes alternative protein opportunity areas surfaced in our research, including ideas for research projects, commercial opportunities, and ecosystem-level solutions to industry challenges.

This first iteration of our Advancing Solutions analysis has provided a roadmap for future action and a wealth of high impact opportunities for investors, entrepreneurs, academic researchers, and governments.

We look forward to updating you as our Advancing Solutions initiative evolves and expands! Please reach out to us for more information about the impact of your grant or gift in supporting this program.

GFI's Advancing Solutions team is conducting a systematic assessment to identify opportunities for accelerating the alternative protein market by determining the root causes of potential market shortcomings, analyzing potential interventions that will help all market players, recruiting partners to implement the most powerful interventions, and evaluating their expected impact.

GFIdeas: Building a Global Community of Alt Protein Pioneers

A core focus of GFI's work to create a sustainable, healthy, and just global food system is bridging the gaps in scientific research, funding, and talent across the alternative protein sector.

Our **GFIdeas** community is helping to bridge those gaps. GFIdeas is a forum for alternative protein company entrepreneurs and scientists that provides peer support, access to funding and partnership opportunities, and community discussions of challenges and best practices. Since the community's inception in 2016, we have grown to more than 1,000 members and have connected successful alternative protein co-founder teams, including Rival Foods, New Age Meats, and Better Meat Co.

We have also created a comprehensive **suite of resources** designed to accelerate progress in the alternative protein sector, including the GFIdeas Directory, a talent database of professionals searching for careers in the alternative protein sector, an alternative protein company database, investor resources, and a 100-page Startup Manual that guides entrepreneurs through the early stages of forming their company and getting their products to market. The Startup Manual has been downloaded thousands of times and was an honoree of Fast Company's 2019 World Changing Ideas.

Broadening the reach of GFIdeas into scientific communities has remained a core need: The next generation of alt protein start-ups needs molecular engineers, cell biologists, and food scientists, as well as founding team members with business acumen and access to seed capital. To meet this need, this spring GFI University Engagement Specialists Amy Huang and Annie Osborn led targeted outreach at leading academic research institutions. Their recruitment drive attracted more than 400 scientists and technically-minded experts to the group in May and June 2020 alone.

The Science of Alt. Protein and Business of Alt. Protein technical seminar series further build this momentum. Twice per month (one science-focused and one entrepreneur / investor-focused), an academic or industry leader presents their latest research, explores an interesting research question, or identifies white space opportunities that warrant further exploration. We share upcoming seminars on our **Events** page and we post some of our recorded seminars on our **YouTube** channel.

If you are an entrepreneur, investor, or scientist, we'd love for you to **join the GFIdeas community!** GFIdeas is a welcoming community available to all and is a great fit for anyone who is currently involved or aspires to work within the alternative protein industry.



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Taking the Long View During Covid-19



GFI was built to be sustainable, nimble, resilient, and to adapt to a rapidly changing food system. With the closing of classrooms, research labs, and businesses in the wake of Covid-19, GFI has adapted to the new normal by mobilizing online resources that engage and educate thousands of stakeholders each month. Our goal is twofold: to support the experts who are transforming the alternative protein industry today and create a pipeline of students, scientists, entrepreneurs, and innovators who can become its leaders in ten years.

Between March and June 2020 alone, we hosted or participated in more than 75 virtual presentations and workshops that reached more than 10,000 people, including many who are new to the alternative protein sector.

For example, in March, GFI SciTech Director David Welch's trip to Israel was canceled, so our GFI Israel team moved everything online, hosting five webinars with more than 100 investors, 150 alternative protein industry professionals, and 100 fermentation industry professionals. In response, the CEO of **Redefine Meat** (a 3D printing startup) shared, "We are all thankful for having an organization like GFI who's helping, advising, and shining a light on a brighter future for the planet and all those living in it. Your team in Israel is exceptional and I'm sure your efforts will pay off big time!"

We promoted our **New Meat Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)** and saw enrollment grow nearly 70% (up 2,000 individuals) within four months. **Business Insider** recommended the course in an article curating opportunities to build your resume without leaving home.

We have developed or strengthened many of our virtual resources since Covid's inception and encourage you to dive in for examples of what our donors' support has made possible, including:



Plant-Based Meat, Eggs, and Dairy and **Cultivated Meat** State of the Industry Reports, which provide the most comprehensive analyses of these industries published to date.



Investor Resource Guide, which helps investors connect with fundraising startups and potential co-investors, understand the alternative protein market and technical landscape, and ensure their current portfolio companies succeed.

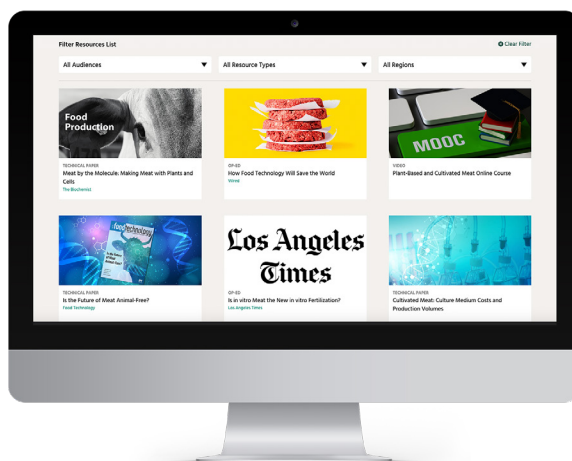


The Good Food Retail Report, which is the first report to rate the top 15 U.S. retailers on their assortment, merchandising, and marketing of plant-based meat, eggs, and dairy.



The Alt. Protein Project Student Group Guide, which guides university students through the process of establishing an official university group, attracting members, leading events, and orchestrating larger engagement opportunities across their campuses.

For our full menu of GFI's resources, all of which have been created thanks to donor support, please visit GFI's **Resources** page.



visit gfi.org/resources



GFI is an international nonprofit building a sustainable, healthy, and just global food system. With unique insight across the scientific, policy, industry, and investment landscapes, we are using the power of food innovation and markets to accelerate the transition of the world's food system toward alternative proteins.



GFI is powered by philanthropy.

All gifts and grants to GFI help us ensure the future of food is healthy, sustainable, and just.



Stay in the know with GFI's email newsletter and monthly reports!



[GFI.org/donate](https://gfi.org/donate)



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