

GFI's GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

February 2024

The top highlights:

- In the first-ever authoritative decision on the matter, Singapore's Islamic Council (MUIS) [ruled that cultivated meat can be halal](#)**, as long as it adheres to certain requirements. This critical decision came after more than a year of deliberations by the Islamic council, during which GFI APAC scientists and policy experts provided numerous technical presentations about the process of cultivating meat from animal cells. GFI APAC SciTech Specialist Maanasa Ravikumar, Ph.D., spoke on a panel about cultivated meat at an invite-only MUIS conference where this ruling was announced. While this decision applies within Singapore, we're hopeful it will serve as a template for other countries and make cultivated meat a viable food choice for the nearly two billion Muslims around the world.
- GFI Europe and GFI's Policy team strategically deployed resources to respond to proposals and bills to ban cultivated meat or censor alternative protein labels.** Most notably, Florida passed a bill to ban cultivated meat—albeit one that included a critical carveout to still allow for research and development—which now goes to the governor's desk. GFI worked to coordinate with legislators and industry stakeholders there and elsewhere to amend proposals and engage alternative protein leaders to testify to advance solutions that align with free markets, innovation, and job creation. This critical work continues; stay tuned for updates!
- GFI India's work with the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, led to the inclusion of alternative proteins as a focal area in the latest U.S. National Science Foundation and Indian Department of Biotechnology [call for proposals for collaborative research](#).** The GFI team will ensure that high-impact collaborative alternative protein proposals are submitted.
- Following months of engagement by GFI Israel's Policy team, the Israeli Higher Education Council announced its premier, five-year climate-focused open call for funding, which explicitly recognizes and incorporates alternative proteins into the funding scheme.** The \$125 million investment is set to support research centers, scholarships, and grants.
- GFI Brazil organized an inaugural [Workshop on Alternative Protein Studies](#) in collaboration with the Brazilian Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Technology.** The virtual event, broadcast on the Ministry's YouTube channel, featured five lectures covering plant-based, cultivated, and fermentation-derived technologies and included a discussion on the quality and safety of alternative meat products.



How we're contributing to our core objectives

The following objectives capture GFI's approach to accelerating the development of alternative proteins and transforming the global food system. Below is a sampling of last month's work.

GFI fosters a strong open-access alternative protein research and training ecosystem

- GFI Israel collaborated with the Israel Innovation Authority and YD Labs, an all-in-one fermentation pilot and R&D facility, to host a fermentation deep dive event for 350 people from the local ecosystem in Caesarea. At the event, GFI Israel VP of SciTech Michal Halpert, Ph.D., presented the challenges and opportunities of fermentation in the alternative proteins space.
- Doris Lee, CEO of GFIC, an independent strategic partner that does mission-aligned work in mainland China, presented on the landscape of cultivated meat at the [Boao Health Food Science Conference & Expo](#) in Hainan Province, an event centered on scientific and technological innovation in the health food industry. Doris also participated in a roundtable hosted by Professor Zhou Guanghong, who developed China's first piece of cultivated meat, to answer audience questions about China's advantages in cultivated meat development. The event featured the first-ever cultivated meat tasting at a high-level global conference in China, with products from Avant Meats, CellX, and Joe's Future Foods.
- On the heels of GFI's work to ensure that the Department of Energy (DOE) includes alternative proteins in their bioeconomy plans, the DOE Industrial Efficiency & Decarbonization Office announced it's seeking decarbonization approaches for high-emitting industrial sectors, including food. Alternative proteins are specifically [highlighted](#) in Topic Area 3 of the [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#), "Decarbonizing Food and Beverage Products."
- The Alt Protein Project (APP, GFI's global university chapter program) had another exciting month of new initiatives. GFI's SciTech team hosted the first-ever APP alumni reunion, with career updates from alumni working in David Kaplan's lab, Wildtype, Bain & Company, General Mills, Earth Finance, Ingredion, Redefine Meat, and more. The team also implemented APP's first internal diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) survey to gather student leaders' reflections and ideas for continued progress in the area. In India, the Mumbai Smart Protein Project collaborated with Biotechnika, a comprehensive resource portal for biotechnology students and researchers, to conduct a four-part [webinar series](#) on alternative proteins' potential to address global challenges; and in Nigeria, the University of Nigeria APP executed a [two-day symposium](#) that attracted an audience of 300 students, faculty, and industry stakeholders who joined to learn about the role of academia in Nigeria's transition to a sustainable protein future.
- Principal Scientist Elliot Swartz, Ph.D., hosted this month's Cultivated Meat Collaborative [webinar](#), featuring presentations from [HiMedia Laboratories](#) on their end-to-end solutions for the cultivated meat industry in India and from [Smart MCs](#) on their unique microcarrier technology in Australia.
- Associate Director of Scientific Ecosystems Amy Huang moderated the February Science of Alt Protein [webinar](#), which featured GFI grantee Dr. Sirli Rosenvold of the Center of Food and



Fermentation Technologies in Estonia. Dr. Sirli's presentation addressed the intricacies of creating aroma authenticity in plant-based salmon and how she and her team are working to solve this challenge.

- GFI Brazil SciTech and Policy team members hosted a brainstorming session with sixteen scientists from Brazilian universities and cultivated meat companies, including one of the world's largest diversified protein companies, to discuss cultivated meat quality and nutrition. The session was organized to identify priority research topics and whitespaces.
- Michal led a presentation showcasing GFI's [sidestreams analysis](#) during a circular economy event for academia, industry, and government stakeholders. The event was part of the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology and the Ministry of Economy [collaboration](#) to advance industry-academia partnerships with a \$1.1 million investment.
- GFIC onboarded six students to the team's first-ever student ambassador program. Ambassadors will work with GFIC for one year, initiating outreach and engagement to introduce new student audiences to alternative protein-focused courses, resources, and events.

GFI influences the public sector to support alternative proteins

- GFI Europe was reelected to the vice presidency of the European Institute of Innovation & Technology's food protein diversification think tank and will continue to lead the organization's policy work. This engagement has been invaluable in placing alternative proteins firmly onto the regulatory and research agendas at the European Commission (EC). This month, GFI Europe presented to EC representatives from seven governments and met with high-level EC policymakers covering health, food safety, R&D, and agriculture.
- Senior Regulatory Attorney Maddie Cohen spoke at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 100th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum on a panel moderated by Sandra Eskin, Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety. Maddie [shared](#) the industry perspective in a discussion on how regulators should label cultivated meat.
- GFI APAC held a sharing session with Thailand's National Science and Technology Development Agency to provide feedback on Thailand's regulatory framework for cultivated meat, with GFI APAC Senior SciTech Analyst Dean Powell, Ph.D., leading on technical points and Policy Specialist Ankur Kumar Chaudhary presenting a comparative analysis with other regulatory frameworks from the United States, Israel, and Singapore. After the meeting, GFI APAC's SciTech team submitted a letter outlining our position and offering potential improvements to the framework.
- GFI Israel CEO Nir Goldstein, GFI Israel VP of Strategy and Policy Alla Voldman-Rantzer, and GFI Israel Associate Director of Policy Adi Ben Tov represented GFI Israel at the inaugural steering committee meeting convened by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development aimed at crafting a National Food Security Strategy. GFI Israel was selected to join the committee's R&D and Innovation Working Group, offering a pivotal opportunity to advocate for the inclusion of alternative proteins as a key element in national food security initiatives.
- Senior Advisor to the President Shayna Fertig presented an introduction to alternative proteins and an overview of California's alternative protein ecosystem to legislative staffers at the California State Capitol. Shayna also moderated a panel featuring Professor Amy Rowat from UCLA, Executive Director Kara Leong from the Integrative Center for Alternative Meat & Protein at UC Davis, and CEO Paul Shapiro from the Better Meat Co. They discussed their progress using

California's \$5 million R&D funding for alternative protein research from 2022 and made the case for additional state funding. The event was hosted by Assemblymember Ash Kalra with support from GFI's California lobbyists and the Policy team.

- GFI India Policy Specialist Radhika Ramesh represented GFI on two high-level panels at the Sixth United Nations Environment Assembly: she appeared alongside government representatives, the UN Foundation, CGIAR, and other industry stakeholders for a session hosted by the UN Environment Programme on their report on alternative proteins; and she co-conducted a GFI India organized workshop highlighting the environmental benefits of alternative proteins, with panelists from the governments of India and the Netherlands and Cleo Verkuijl from the Stockholm Environment Institute.
- GFI Europe Policy Officer Pauline Grimmer led GFI Europe's engagement in a [joint letter](#) coordinated by EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries. The letter was endorsed by 17 organizations and outlined broad principles that the European Commission should follow in its forthcoming Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative.

GFI influences the private sector to prioritize alternative proteins

- GFI APAC released a [first-of-its-kind study](#) on consumer perceptions of conventional and plant-based meat in Southeast Asia. The report identifies diverse consumer segments, providing a roadmap for customized marketing and product development strategies to foster the growth of the plant-based meat market across the region. Check out the related [webinar](#) or [summary article](#) for key results and takeaways from the research.
- Corporate Engagement Lead Marika Azoff, Senior VP of Corporate Engagement Caroline Bushnell, and Senior VP of SciTech Liz Specht, Ph.D., presented to one of the largest retailers in the world, providing a market overview of alternative proteins and diving into fermentation and cultivated technologies. Attendees included top executives from their fresh foods, produce, meat and seafood, merchandising, and strategy departments.
- President and Founder Bruce Friedrich delivered a keynote presentation at a conference for alternative protein company CEOs and CTOs in Barcelona. His keynote was delivered to a shared audience of attendees from the alternative proteins summit and the Bioengineering Leaders Summit. In Barcelona, Bruce also spoke at the kickoff of a planned "monthly series on agri-tech revolution and system innovations" that was sponsored by [Naked Innovations](#) (a food systems VC) and the [Norrsken Accelerator](#).
- GFI India Acting Managing Director Sneha Singh and GFI India Corporate Engagement Specialist Divya Saravana presented on the role of pulses in alternative proteins at the Global Pulse Confederation (GPC) [Pulses 24](#) conference in New Delhi, where climate-resilient agriculture and food systems were hot topics. GFI India Policy Manager Arghadeep Saha and Divya's interview on the alternative protein industry's potential was featured in the [print edition](#) (pg 38-39) of GPC's digital magazine that was distributed to conference attendees, which included prominent international industry heads, Indian politicians, and country ambassadors.
- GFI India published a [new study](#) with insights on packaging and labeling for plant-based meat and dairy in India. The study explores consumer perception of existing packaging in the market and provides insight into different elements that can drive consumer understanding of these products.
- GFIC Innovation & Entrepreneurship Manager Viola Chen presented on cultivated meat and the

global market at the [Healthy Innovation Conference](#), the Middle East and North Africa's first summit focused on food and health innovations. The Dubai event attracted more than 500 senior executives from international biotech and alternative protein companies.

- Senior Corporate Engagement Manager Laine Clark hosted a roundtable focused on institutional procurement for the alternative protein sector, identifying challenges and concerns related to alternative proteins' cost and nutritional profile. Participants included the New York City Office of Food Policy, the City and County of Denver, the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, Plant Futures, Greener by Default, Cosmic Eats, Improved Nature, and Rebellyous Foods.
- Director of Corporate Engagement Tessa Hale presented on the sustainability of alternative proteins and moderated a panel with BlueNalu and Pulmuone Foods at a meeting for the Hospitality Network of the [Young Presidents' Organization](#), a global leadership community of chief executives. CEOs of 120 food and beverage businesses were in attendance.
- Startup Innovation Lead Audrey Spence hosted the February Business of Alt Protein [webinar](#), which welcomed three marketing experts to discuss effective marketing and communications strategies for alternative protein companies. The webinar filled a gap by specifically targeting B2B marketing needs and objectives.
- Lead Scientist Adam Leman, Ph.D., joined a virtual [panel](#) on sustainable proteins from novel sources organized by Protein Production Technology International. Adam spoke alongside representatives from DSM-Firmenich, Angel Yeast, Superbrewed Foods, and Döhler to discuss fermentation technologies and the sustainability benefits of fermentation-derived food proteins.
- Lead Scientist Claire Bomkamp, Ph.D., [presented](#) opportunities for alternative proteins in the omega-3 industry at the Global Organization for EPA & DHA Exchange conference in Athens. She shared an overview of the latest trends in the alternative seafood market and the results from GFI's recent omega-3 survey.

GFI positions alternative proteins as a scalable solution to global challenges

- At the World Forum on the Future of Democracy, Tech, and Humankind convened by the Cinema for Peace in Berlin, Bruce appeared on panels focused on climate and hunger/malnutrition to discuss alternative proteins as part of the solution to both global challenges. Bruce shared the climate panel with the climate minister of Ireland and the hunger/malnutrition panel with Live Aid founder (and Boomtown Rats frontman) Bob Geldof.
- Maddie spoke about alternative proteins' environmental and food security benefits in a press roundtable event hosted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Reporters from the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Examiner*, and E&E News (a subdivision of Politico) attended the event.
- GFI Brazil released its annual [Year in Review](#) report, showcasing the team's initiatives and accomplishments in three languages (English, Portuguese, and Spanish) to reach audiences across Latin America.



Top media mentions:

- GFI Europe Senior Public Affairs Manager Ivo Rzegotta was quoted in one of the most influential news outlets in Germany, *Der Spiegel*, in an [article](#) about cellular agriculture and startups working in the space. Ivo addressed the regulatory challenges and opportunities local food companies face as a result of the rigorous authorization process in the European Union.
- GFI Europe Policy Manager Linus Pardoe was quoted in a *Financial Times* [piece](#) about the need for regulatory reform in the United Kingdom: “There’s been a lot of interest since Brexit in the potential for the UK to have faster routes to market for alternative proteins like cultivated meat and animal-free dairy, but where this all cashes out is at the FSA ... the agency holds the pen.”
- Nir was featured in one of Israel's foremost economic newspapers, *Globes*, for a comprehensive [article](#) on obstacles and opportunities within the alternative protein sector. “A groundbreaking alternative to meat could have profound implications for both the economy and global security, marking a monumental shift in cultural and geopolitical landscapes.”
- GFI APAC Senior Communications Manager Ryan Huling was featured in a [guest column](#) for the *South China Morning Post*—one of Asia’s top media outlets. His article summarizes insights from GFI APAC’s new consumer report, highlighting interest in protein diversity and the impact of affordability on consumer choices.

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From everyone on [Team GFI](#), thank you for your enthusiasm, partnership, and commitment to a better future.

Sincerely,



Bruce Friedrich
President and Founder

