

GFI's GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

April 2023

The top highlights:

- GFI Europe has found a new leader.** After a rigorous process that saw more than 500 candidates applying to replace Managing Director Richard Parr, the GFI Europe board offered the position to [Alex Mayers](#). Alex is currently Head of Operations for GFI Europe, a role in which he's skillfully overseen the building of all aspects of the team's operations over the last four years. His previous leadership, management, and programmatic roles have seen him successfully deliver challenging projects around the world. From mid-June, Richard will shift into the role of Strategic Advisor and remain a member of the GFI Europe board of directors.
- GFI published the most authoritative and in-depth reviews of alternative proteins to date.** The annual [State of the Industry Reports](#) feature insights on key technologies, market activity, scientific advances, and government and regulatory developments for the three core technology pillars of alternative proteins. Our [executive summary](#) provides the top takeaways and we hosted a [webinar series](#) covering each report.
- GFI Israel continued to foster support for alternative proteins from the top levels of government.** At an event co-organized by GFI Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, several of the most senior government officials, and top food industry representatives toured a key Israeli alternative protein company, ate cultivated beef and fish, and reiterated Israel's commitment to lead on alternative proteins. GFI Israel CEO Nir Goldstein kicked off the event with a presentation on the state of alternative proteins in Israel, followed by a roundtable discussion attended by PM Netanyahu as well as several ministers, directors general, and industry leaders.
- GFI APAC was a formal knowledge partner and helped shape the agenda for [Asia's largest gathering of leading food and beverage manufacturers](#).** Experts from A*STAR, CSIRO (Australia's national science research agency), Esco Aster, and leading companies in the alternative protein industry participated in GFI-moderated panels and guided tours. At the conclusion of the conference, GFI hosted more than 100 attendees at an invite-only alt protein networking event (pictured above) in collaboration with Agri-Food Tech Expo Asia, Bühler Group, and Big Idea Ventures.



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

- VP of Science & Technology Liz Specht, Ph.D., participated in a workshop hosted by the Gates Foundation which explored the use of alt proteins in maternal nutrition solutions. It included attendees from a number of major purchasers of protein ingredients such as the UN World Food Programme and UNICEF, as well as researchers from multiple academic institutions including CSIRO, Iowa State, Purdue University, UC Davis, and Wageningen University and Research.
- Lead Scientist Claire Bomkamp, Ph.D., presented on the latest technological advances in cultivated meat and seafood and similarities to biomedical tissue engineering at TERMIS-AM (Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine International Society-Americas) in Boston. She was one of the three keynote speakers for a session focused on the engineering and commercialization of cultivated meat, which also included speakers Prof. Glenn Gaudette and Prof. David Kaplan.
- The SciTech team published a guide to [catalyzing alternative protein entrepreneurship](#), which provides actionable steps university students can take to start a high-impact alternative protein spinout and commercialize university research.
- Lead Scientist Elliot Swartz, Ph.D., led a presentation on the environmental impacts of cultivated meat at April's Science of Alt Protein [seminar](#). Elliot shared findings from a [new publication](#) that builds upon the cultivated meat life cycle assessment GFI and GAIA commissioned and disseminated in 2021. CE Delft's Pelle Sinke, an LCA Specialist and the study's lead author, joined the seminar for a robust Q&A session with 188 attendees.
- Elliot hosted this month's Cultivated Meat Collaborative [seminar](#) (our invite-only webinar for cultivated meat companies), which featured presentations from [PeptiGrowth](#) and GFI grantee [Defined Bioscience](#). The seminar addressed how new media and growth factor technologies can accelerate the cultivated meat industry.
- Academic Community Manager Nathan Ahlgrim, Ph.D., Academic Community Coordinator Asia Sheehab, and Science and Technology Coordinator Vanessa Assaro-Aluisa launched new tools for chapters of the Alt Protein Project (APP, GFI's university chapter initiative), including a template for groups to map their university ecosystem and an internal mentor directory for students to request 1:1 career mentorship from APP alumni.
- Associate Director of Scientific Ecosystems Amy Huang gave the kick-off lecture for the third iteration of Stanford University's Rethinking Meat course started by the Stanford APP. 150 students enrolled in the course.
- Scientific Partnerships Manager Marcelo Aspiras, Ph.D. released our first bimonthly [newsletter](#) targeted at alt protein researchers in the Alt Protein Researcher Directory ([APRD](#)). This will be a bi-monthly newsletter highlighting research updates, funding opportunities, events, and more.
- Three APP groups executed successful and well-attended student-led conferences this month. Duke and UNC Chapel Hill co-hosted "[Making Alt Proteins the New Default](#)" in the Research Triangle Park, featuring two panels on industry and regulation, pitch competitions, keynote speeches, and networking. SDSU's San Diego Alt Protein Summit featured Founder & President Bruce Friedrich as the keynote, Strategic Advisor Brian Berry and Asia as panelists alongside local

alternative protein champions, and samples from local alternative protein companies.

- GFI Israel Senior Scientist Tom Ben-Arye Cohen, Ph.D., led a roundtable discussion on foodtech with researchers and entrepreneurs for an event organized by the Technion and PLANETech, a climate-tech ecosystem catalyst. The head of the Technion's Technology Transfer Office and research authority were among the participants.
- As part of Harvard's first course on sustainable food systems, six Harvard students interviewed nine scientists who received GFI grants about what our grant program meant to them. The students created [this inspiring highlight reel](#).

GFI influences the public sector to support alternative proteins

- The UK government announced its largest ever single investment in alternative protein R&D through a £12 million grant for a research center dedicated to cultivated meat and precision fermentation. The funds were awarded to the CARMA (Cellular AgRiculture MANufacturing) Hub, an interdisciplinary consortium led by the University of Bath. GFI Europe wrote a letter in support of the consortium's proposal as a member of its independent advisory board.
- VP of Policy Jessica Almy, J.D., spoke about the need for additional government support for alternative protein research and development and commercialization at a congressional briefing (pictured right) on cultivated meat and seafood hosted by Rep. Ben Cline (R-VA-06) and Finless Foods in the United States Capital. Other panelists were Finless Foods' Shannon Cosentino-Roush, Eat JUST's Andrew Noyes, and the Breakthrough Institute's Alex Smith. In attendance were staff for the House Agriculture Committee and members of the press, among others.
- GFI Brazil Policy Analyst Mariana Bernal met with a top official at the Brazilian Ministry of Environment and Climate Change who was the leading voice at the [Global Stocktake technical dialogues](#) (which aim to develop a shared understanding of the latest information on the implementation of the Paris Agreement) on behalf of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. He agreed to liaise between GFI Brazil and the Ministry on matters related to climate.
- GFI Brazil SciTech Specialist Amanda Leitolis, Ph.D., Elliot, and Associate Director of Regulatory Affairs Laura Braden, J.D., all played a role in the recently published Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) [report](#) on the food safety aspects of cultivated meat. Amanda and Elliot were selected as expert consultants last November, and Laura and Elliot provided technical review of the report in advance of its publication. FAO and the World Health Organization rolled out the report in a joint webinar that positively framed the potential impact cultivated meat could have in feeding the world sustainably.
- With support from GFI Israel, the Israel Innovation Authority and the Food Safety Authority collaborated on a joint pilot program with four alternative protein companies to determine the best regulatory paths and safety criteria for regulatory approval of novel alternative proteins. The pilot recently resulted in a first-of-its-kind regulatory approval for precession fermentation company Remilk to market and sell its non-animal dairy products to Israeli consumers.



- Associate Legislative Director Penny Eastman organized a GFI co-hosted, widely attended reception for Capitol Hill staff entitled “The Future of Food.” Representatives Julia Brownley, Earl Blumenauer, and Vicente Gonzalez attended.
- Legislative Specialist Drake Jamali joined the California Alternative Proteins Working Group of the California State Legislature to tour the Better Meat Co. facility in West Sacramento (pictured right) and sample their products. Led by Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-25), the working group was recently formed to advance the alternative protein sector and promote open-access research and development in the state.
- GFI received accreditation from the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of the United Nations Environment Programme. Leading up to sessions of the UNEA, GFI will have the opportunity to participate in Regional Consultation Meetings, submit written contributions to working documents, and circulate written statements to governments in the form of information documents.



GFI influences the for-profit sector to prioritize alternative proteins

- GFI Europe released a series of [reports](#) analyzing NielsenIQ data across 13 European countries. The reports show sales of plant-based foods grew by 21 percent between 2020 and 2022 to reach a record €5.8 billion. GFI Europe Senior Corporate Engagement Manager Carlotte Lucas hosted a [webinar](#) to share an overview of the data and highlight key market trends.
- GFI launched the annual [retail market insights](#) in collaboration with the Plant Based Foods Association. This analysis is the plant-based industry’s go-to source on market size and growth of plant-based foods. A complementary blog post titled [2023 outlook: The state of the plant-based meat category](#) digs deep into the dynamics behind plant-based meat sales data in the United States, provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors driving the growth of sales, and explores the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the industry.
- The GFI India team launched the [India Smart Protein Innovation Challenge](#) (ISPIC) 2023. ISPIC addresses the talent bottleneck in the sector and has trained hundreds of students and young professionals in the business, science, and policy of alternative protein and accelerated go-to-market for dozens of new innovators and startup hopefuls through its one-of-its-kind, comprehensive programming. GFI India Innovation Specialist Devika Suresh recruited stakeholders from six academic institutions (TDU, IIMR, IIT Bombay, NIFTEM, CIFE, and ICRISAT) who will provide mentorship and internship opportunities to ISPIC winners.
- GFI Brazil Corporate Engagement Data Specialist Camila Lupetti presented the results of [The Brazilian Consumer and the Plant-based Market Research - 2022](#) at the Working Group on Alternative Proteins monthly meeting led by GFI Brazil at the Brazilian Bioinnovation Association (ABBI). With nine companies present, it was an opportunity to disseminate knowledge and disclose our recommendations for the sector’s growth.
- Startup Innovation Specialist Audrey Gyr served as a guest lecturer during the Illinois University Integrated Bioprocessing Research Laboratory’s Fermentation Short Course. She presented on the opportunities in fermentation specific to alt proteins to an audience of more than 60 fermentation professionals from companies including ADM, Kraft Heinz, Dedert, and Tate & Lyle.

- GFI APAC SciTech Specialist Maanasa Ravikumar, Ph.D., and GFI APAC SciTech Engagement Specialist Arin Naidu presented at a networking session of sustainability-focused investors, philanthropists, and VCs who were keen to learn about alternative proteins. Their presentation focused on why alternative proteins are a scalable climate solution and why more public and private investments are needed to drive the industry forward. Many audience members who had little prior knowledge of the impact of alternative proteins said they are now more interested to invest in this sector.
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship Manager Laine Clark, in conjunction with GFI Entrepreneur in Residence Deimena Drąsutytė, hosted a roundtable on enabling synthetic biology infrastructure for alternative proteins. Participants included representatives from the UK Government, Accenture, Amazon Web Services, Discovery Park, University of Kent, London Biofoundry, Global Biofoundry Alliance, the National Collection of Yeast Cultures, and HERlab.
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship Manager Viola Chen of GFIC, an independent strategic partner that does mission-aligned work in mainland China, presented on the potential of fermentation-made alternative proteins at China's largest alternative protein expo. GFIC Science and Technology Manager Yeshi Liang also shared the academic landscape of alternative protein in China.
- GFI Brazil, in partnership with the Israel Trade and Investment Office (part of the Israeli consulate in Brazil) and with support from GFI Israel, organized a webinar targeting Israeli alternative protein companies interested in the Brazilian market. This was a follow-up to the Pitch Day event that occurred earlier this year where Israeli fermentation startups presented their technologies to Brazilian companies and investors.
- VP of Corporate Engagement Caroline Bushnell, Investor Engagement Manager Sharyn Murray, and Tom hosted a workshop on the ESG frameworks for members of the World Business Council For Sustainable Development, including large CPG companies, food service companies, and ingredient suppliers. Representatives of Danone, Griffith Foods, Sonae, Unilever, Kraft Heinz, and Aramark joined the workshop.
- Sharyn and Elliot met with Verbena Value Capital Partners—one of the largest portfolios in Millennium's multi-portfolio hedge fund—to answer questions about considerations related to cultivated meat commercialization, as well as the impact on incumbent companies. Millennium is one of the largest and most prominent hedge funds in the world.
- Charlotte gave the opening keynote speech at the first-ever Plant-based Protein Manufacturing Summit in Amsterdam. Her presentation, which gave an overview of the [Plant-based meat: Anticipating 2030 production requirements](#) report, kicked off two days of content focused on scaling up production. In attendance were leading European startups, including Planted, La Vie, Mushlabs, Redefine Meat, and Juicy Marbles.
- GFI India Senior Innovation Specialist Nicole Rocque and GFI India Innovation Associate Poorvasha Kar hosted a GFIdeas India [webinar](#) on investments in biotechnology and alternative protein with Divya Jain from BioAngels, a newly set-up angel investor network for the biotechnology sector. The webinar provided a briefing about the angel investment ecosystem in India and its potential to support innovation in the biotechnology and alternative protein sector.

GFI positions alternative proteins as a scalable solution to global challenges

- Media & Communications Manager Carolyn Englar and Digital Engagement Specialist Mary Ellen Shoup were on the ground in Boise for the 2023 Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) conference. They promoted GFI’s [custom SEJ webpage](#) and spread the word to influential reporters on the impact and opportunity of alternative proteins to address climate change, biodiversity loss, food insecurity, and more.

Top media mentions:

- Liz was featured in [a Future of Food segment on CNN](#) that highlighted algae-based alternative proteins and 3D-printed cultivated meat in which she said, “We have to be open to all the tools in our toolkit to make a food system that can actually sustain a population of the size we’re approaching.”
- GFI APAC Senior Communications Manager Ryan Huling worked with the *South China Morning Post*—Hong Kong’s newspaper of record—to publish [an article about GFI grantee Professor Zhang Chen](#) from Fuzhou University who is exploring novel methods to extract protein from green tea leaves. Excerpt: “The research is significant because it has the potential to diversify the alternative protein market, which widely uses soy or wheat as sources of proteins, for which Asia relies heavily on Western imports. It is also more environmentally sustainable and economic as it elevates the value of millions of tonnes of tea waste that the world generates each year.”
- The *Wall Street Journal* quoted Bruce [in a piece](#) about the difficulties of commercializing cultivated meat (this underlines the critical nature of GFI’s policy work): “If alternative proteins are not successful, the Paris climate agreement goals are probably impossible to meet.”
- [Fantástico](#), a Brazilian Sunday television program with the highest viewership in the country, discussed the development of cultivated meat in Brazil and cited GFI Brazil’s partnership with the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

Thank you for fueling our mission!

GFI is powered by philanthropy; these accomplishments are only possible thanks to gifts and grants from our family of donors. If you or someone you know would like to learn more about supporting the work you read about in our Global Highlights, please contact philanthropy@gfi.org.

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

Sincerely,



Bruce Friedrich
President and Founder

