GFI's GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

March 2025

The top highlights:

- **GFI published a new alternative proteins public investment database**, which provides information on past and current public investments in science and commercialization by governments around the world—all the way back to NASA's 1999 investment in cultivated meat and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2005 investment in plant-based meat (which led to the founding of Beyond Meat).
- **GFI Brazil organized a forum for Brazilian scientists, government researchers, and industry representatives, many from leading federal universities, focused on the soy supply chain**. The forum aimed to identify technological solutions to improve the quality of soy-based ingredients, and the insights gathered will drive targeted research to address key hurdles and support the development of improved plant-based meat products.
- **GFI lead scientist Priera Panescu Scott, Ph.D., served as co-editor for a special issue of the journal *Current Research in Food Science*,** which focused on cutting-edge developments in alternative protein science. Check out the editorial overview written by Priera and GFI grantee alum Professor Alejandro Marangoni for a summary of key topics and insights.
- **The Alt Protein Project (APP, GFI's global college chapter program) held its first Regional Student Symposium** during the co-located Plant Based Tech and New Meat Brazil events in São Paulo. Twenty-five students from APP groups across Latin America came together to connect, collaborate, and grow as future professionals in the alternative protein sector. GFI Brazil also hosted a dedicated APP session at New Meat Brazil, which featured a presentation of student group achievements and an industry-academia roundtable on bridging science and innovation.
- **GFI APAC Senior SciTech Analyst Dean Powell, Ph.D., delivered a presentation on cell culture media at a critical Codex Alimentarius ("food code") session in Seoul for food safety and global trade**. He also served as a panelist on cultivated meat regulation alongside representatives from the Singapore Food Agency, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment. GFI submitted comments on a joint proposal by Singapore and China to develop guidelines for food safety assessments of culture media, which were drafted by Dean and Regulatory Attorney Mackenzie Battle, J.D. The Codex Committee on Food Additives agreed to form a working group to advance the proposal, to be co-chaired by Singapore, China, the Republic of Korea, and Saudi Arabia.



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 launched the 2025 Research Grant Program Request for Proposals (RFP). The program will fund up to $3.5 million in open-access research aimed at tackling urgent scientific and technological challenges. The priority areas for this year's RFP include fermentation-derived ingredients to enhance plant-based meat products and cell line development for cultivated meat and seafood.
- GFI Consultancy, an independent strategic partner that does mission-aligned work in China, published the Biomass Fermentation Messaging Report, China's first consumer perception study on biomass fermentation proteins. The report highlights opportunities in meal replacements, snacks, and sports nutrition while emphasizing the need for targeted consumer education and transparency.
- GFI India announced a request for proposals for research on protein bioavailability from processed millet- and pulse-based ingredients and plant-based meat products. The team is inviting proposals from scientists and faculty members from Indian academic institutions, national laboratories, and recognized R&D organizations across science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Findings from this study are expected to provide strategic recommendations for producing plant-based ingredients and end products with high-quality protein.
- GFI Europe Senior Research and Grants Manager Stella Child, Ph.D., moderated a panel on research and innovation gaps for sustainable and competitive food systems at Food2030 and Beyond, a workshop hosted by the European Commission's Director General for Research and Innovation. Panelists included representatives from the European Investment Bank, the European Technology Platform "Food For Life," and the European Circular Bioeconomy Fund.
- GFI Israel released a report on solid-state fermentation, authored by Barak Dror, a fermentation expert and scientific consultant to GFI Israel. The report explores the technology's potential, scale-up strategies, technical hurdles, and future innovations.
- GFI India, in partnership with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the Central Institute of Fisheries Education, hosted a technical session on biotechnology opportunities in cultivated seafood at the International Conference on Fisheries Biotechnology in Mumbai. Dr. Amit K. Tripathi from the Government of India's Department of Biotechnology opened the session with remarks on the role of alternative proteins in sustainable food systems and in growing the Indian bioeconomy. Senior Lead Scientist Claire Bomkamp, Ph.D., provided a presentation on the current state of cultivated seafood research and opportunities for aquaculture producers to get involved.
- Senior Lead Scientist Nikhita Mansukhani Kogar, Ph.D., spoke on a panel about ultraprocessed foods at the MISTA Healthy Nutrition Symposium. The discussion highlighted the nutritional benefits of plant-based proteins and where more research is needed to see improvements.
- GFI India SciTech Manager Chandana Tekkatte participated in an industry-academia brainstorming session hosted by one of India's largest private education networks to help align their biotechnology curriculum with emerging sectors outlined in the Government of India's BioE3 Policy. Chandana provided input on integrating advanced training modules on alternative proteins

into existing core courses and adding a specialized alternative protein elective in the program's final year.
- Senior Associate Director of Scientific Ecosystems Amy Huang moderated this month's Science of Alt Protein webinar featuring Dr. Julia Keppler of Wageningen University. Dr. Keppler shared her research demonstrating how the functionality of protein ingredients can be tailored for specific purposes.
- Principal Scientist Adam Leman, Ph.D., presented at the Society of Toxicology annual meeting during a session on novel foods. He spoke about precision fermentation for food ingredients, emerging biotechnology, and safety.
- GFI Brazil Senior SciTech Analyst Isabela de Oliveira Pereira delivered a lecture on sidestream utilization for alternative proteins during a workshop on agroindustrial by-products at the Faculty of Food Engineering, UNICAMP, São Paulo. The workshop focused on key areas of innovation and sustainability in food science and brought together leading researchers from the Technical University of Munich, Fraunhofer IVV, and various universities across Brazil.
- Stella supported the planning and execution of the EIT Food Protein Diversification Think Tank workshop on funding mechanisms for protein diversification. The workshop aimed to produce detailed recommendations for EIT Food Think Tank to use to influence the European Commission's future funding in R&D and infrastructure.
- GFI Israel SciTech Manager Avishag Levi Bar-Shalom, Ph.D., hosted a webinar on functional biomimicry with guest presenter Asaf Cohen Jonathan, food engineer and scientific consultant to GFI Israel. His presentation explored how proteins are essential ingredients for achieving biomimicry in plant-based products.

GFI influences the public sector to support alternative proteins

- Senior Policy Specialist Maille O'Donnell spoke on the panel "Navigating the future of food: How the new administration will shape health, nutrition, and policy" at Future Food-Tech San Francisco. She discussed how the alternative protein industry can position itself for success in the current political moment.
- GFI Europe Senior Policy Manager Seth Roberts spoke on a panel at the UK Ambassador's Residence in Brussels, hosted by the UK Mission to the European Union and the UK's Food Standards Agency. The discussion centered on regulation that enables innovation while ensuring consumer safety.
- South Korea Startup Lead Yeonjoo La delivered a presentation at the Bio Future Food Industry Seminar, organized by KoreaBIO and the Bio-Based Future Food Industry Committee—two organizations that GFI APAC signed a memorandum of understanding with last year. During a session on the current status of global marketing, investment, and regulation, Yeonjoo shared recent trends and developments in the regulation of cultivated meat.
- GFI Brazil participated in the foundation of Chile's first alternative protein association, Chile en Base a Plantas, a non-profit trade organization bringing together brands, startups, and companies. GFI Brazil will provide the association with strategic support as it aims to strengthen and consolidate the plant-based sector in the region.
- GFI's Policy and Government Relations team prevailed against bills to ban cultivated meat in Georgia, Illinois, and Kentucky, working with lobbyists in the states and coordinating testimony and

messaging. The crossover deadlines in all three states have passed without the bills receiving a hearing in their respective second chambers. In Tennessee, the team worked with our contract lobbyist to prevent a cultivated meat ban and secure fair amendments through a proposed permit process for cultivated meat—ensuring reasonable terms for companies and helping the improved version pass a key Senate committee.
- GFI India Policy Manager Arghadeep Saha and GFI India Policy Specialist Vidvatta Sharma attended the North India convening of civil society stakeholders organized by the Consortium for Agroecological Transformation to present on how plant proteins can be part of the discourse on sustainable agriculture.

GFI influences the private sector to prioritize alternative proteins

- GFI released a first-of-its-kind plant-based meat consumer segmentation report that provides a framework to better understand distinct consumer groups that exist in the market, their needs and attitudes, and opportunities to grow plant-based meat adoption.
- GFI Europe Head of Industry Carlotte Lucas was a guest speaker on a UK Food Manufacture webinar, The Future of Meat, alongside the poultry company Pilgrims, the British Meat Processors Association, and consumer insights firm Levercliff. Her presentation focused on the plant-based food landscape in the United Kingdom and opportunities to improve products.
- Corporate Engagement Manager Abby Sewell, Corporate Engagement Manager Marika Azoff, and Carlotte presented at the March Business of Alt Protein webinar to provide an overview of the state of the global precision fermentation industry, including market trends, applications, and opportunities. With support from Adam, the team hosted a related closed-door roundtable, attended by representatives from 11 large corporations, to discuss the value proposition of precision fermentation, its role in sustainability and alternative protein strategies, and the challenges and collaborations needed to scale the technology.

GFI positions alternative proteins as a scalable solution to global challenges

- GFI India Managing Director Sneha Singh spoke at a food systems summit about India's opportunity to lead the world in the development of delicious and affordable plant-based and cultivated meat products. The Global Sustainability Alliance, organizer of the summit, featured Sneha in a spotlight interview clip.
- Priera and GFI ESG consultant Tom Chapman provided insight and feedback to the non-profit Ceres for their newly published report, Unlocking Opportunity: Addressing Livestock Methane to Build Resilient Food Systems. The report points to alternative proteins as a key opportunity to lower methane emissions.
- GFI Israel Sustainability & Food Security Senior Manager Shiri Heffer participated in Israel's first Environmental Economics Forum meeting, which brought together environmental economists from leading university environmental schools, philanthropic organizations, government ministries, NGOs, and industry. Shiri emphasized the importance of promoting alternative proteins as a response to key environmental challenges, as well as the need to develop effective economic tools to support climate innovation in this sector.
- GFI APAC published its 2024 Year in Review, recapping the significant strides made in advancing alternative protein science and manufacturing across the world's most populous continent.

Top media mentions:

- Associate Director of Regulatory Affairs Maddie Cohen, J.D., was quoted in a *New York Times* piece about state-level cultivated meat bans and the current regulatory landscape. The article also includes insights from Director of Policy and Government Relations Pepin Tuma, J.D., on the growing bipartisan opposition to ban bills among ranching groups and state lawmakers.
- *Bloomberg* published an editorial on why the success of cultivated meat should be determined by consumers rather than protectionist policies. Ahead of its publication, Senior VP of Policy and Government Relations Jessica Almy, J.D., Principal Scientist Elliot Swartz, Ph.D., and Maddie spoke with the editorial board to share their expertise on the scientific and policy landscape of cultivated meat.
- GFI APAC Managing Director Mirte Gosker was quoted in *The Halal Times* in an article covering the Korea Muslim Federation's issuance of the world's second fatwa declaring halal permissibility for cultivated meat. Excerpt: "For cultivated meat to go from novelty to norm, it must meet the dietary needs of diverse communities, including the over one billion people who follow Halal standards."
- GFI Europe Senior Policy Manager Linus Pardoe was featured on a broadcast interview for *BBC Radio 5 Live*'s breakfast show, responding to members of the public who contacted the program with questions about cultivated meat. In talking about the benefits of cultivated meat, Linus discussed the impact of industrial agriculture, sharing, "It leads to a lot of localized environmental damage, in terms of things like water pollution and air pollution. So in the long run, I think cultivated meat could help satisfy some of that demand and make sure we're not securing our whole food supply from these industrial conditions."

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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