FAKE MEAT FACTS

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) work toward finalizing a comprehensive regulatory framework for lab-grown fake meat, critical questions about production and food safety must be addressed.

1. Will the FDA evaluate the pre-market safety of the products?
   The initial announcement of the regulatory framework made no mention of a pre-market safety evaluation, which FDA has traditionally been responsible for conducting.

2. Will a USDA veterinarian inspect animals that provide cells for the culturing process?
   Ante-mortem inspection of every animal is a fundamental component of inspection and should be applied to livestock used in the cell-cultured protein manufacturing process.

3. When and how will oversight of the production process transition from FDA to USDA?
   The framework notes that an oversight transition will occur during the “cell harvest stage” but does not provide details on the specific timing and mechanics.

4. How will antibiotics be used in the production process?
   Despite the claims of some manufacturers, independent scientists have noted that antibiotics will be used in the production process and raised questions about the impact on the finished food product.

5. How will food safety risks change when cell-cultured products are manufactured at commercial scale?
   Risks associated with commercial production may differ from the risks associated with production in the research and development phase.

6. Is the finished product safe for human consumption?
   Fake meat industry representatives claim that the technologies used in cell-cultured manufacturing are widely-used and understood, but the finished product must still be evaluated for safety.

7. How does the finished product compare to conventionally-produced meat on a scientific level?
   Manufacturers claim that cell-cultured products will be identical to conventional meat but have thus far not provided evidence of compositional and nutritional similarities.

8. Have the finished products been analyzed by independent scientists?
   In the absence of independent, scientific evaluation of cell-cultured products, assessments will be based on the unverified claims of manufacturers and limited academic research.