

# Cultivated Meat in India

Consumer awareness,  
perceptions, drivers  
& barriers



Photo credit: Umami Bioworks



## Authors

### Rajyalakshmi G

Market & Consumer Insights Advisor, The Good Food Institute India

 [rajig@gfi.org](mailto:rajig@gfi.org)  [LinkedIn](#)

### Shaveta Bhardwaj

Co-founder & CEO, Sprint Studio AI

 [shaveta@sprintstudio.ai](mailto:shaveta@sprintstudio.ai)  [LinkedIn](#)

### Manu Bhatia Jaswal

Qualitative Architect, Sprint Studio AI

 [manu.b@sprintstudio.ai](mailto:manu.b@sprintstudio.ai)  [LinkedIn](#)

**Edit and design:** Mansi Virmani, Ramona Mukherji, Jaanvi Parekh, Studio Fable

## About the Good Food Institute India

The Good Food Institute India (GFI India)\* is the leading expert on India's emerging smart protein sector—the ecosystem of plant-based, cultivated, and fermentation-derived meat, eggs, and dairy. Drawing on India's unique strengths—including indigenous crops, a strong agrarian economy, low-cost technologies and infrastructure, an abundant talent pool, and biomanufacturing prowess—GFI India provides strategic market intelligence, ecosystem development support, and sector-focused advisory to institutional, academic, business, and civil society stakeholders across the smart protein value chain. Our work is also informed by the global research, technical expertise, and best practices shared by our international network of organisations across the U.S., Brazil, Europe, Israel, Japan, and APAC. Our team of experts across science, business, and policy helps our partners unlock the knowledge and resources needed to transform how meat is made—satisfying rising food demand in ways that accelerate climate progress, protect animals and ecosystems, and strengthen public health.

At GFI India, we're dedicated to positioning India as a global leader in the rapidly evolving smart protein sector.

\*GFI India refers to the brand name used by Alternative Protein Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (APSPL).

## INTRODUCTION

Cultivated meat is emerging as a global industry, although regulatory approvals are currently limited to a few countries. In India, a small number of companies are developing cultivated meat ingredients and end products, with some in the pre-commercialisation stage. This study assesses consumer awareness, perceptions, and acceptance of cultivated meat in India to provide a consumer-led perspective on the category.

## CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARDS MEAT

Meat consumption is deeply embedded in the Indian consumer's lifestyle, driven by its perceived nutritional value, sensory appeal, habit, and emotional and cultural connection. Meat eaters consider it a key source of protein and an indulgent, satisfying food that is integral to their everyday meals.

At the same time, **concerns around freshness and quality (46%), disease and contamination risks (39%), the use of antibiotics and hormones (33%) and impact on long-term health (40%) persist.**

These shortcomings present a compelling whitespace for solutions that can deliver the benefits of meat without compromise.

## AWARENESS OF CULTIVATED MEAT

One in two consumers claim to be familiar with cultivated meat. **Frequent meat consumers** (66% among daily meat consumers vs. 36% among occasional meat consumers) and **those more open to trying new food categories** (55% vs 41%) are seen to be more aware of the category. Younger consumers also show greater awareness compared to older cohorts. Despite a fair level of awareness, **only 28% of consumers report high familiarity** with the concept. Social media emerges as the single largest source of information for all consumers.

## CONSUMER UNDERSTANDING AND APPEAL

When introduced to the concept, consumers' first reactions are **overwhelmingly positive**, marked by **delight, surprise, and curiosity**. Consumers demonstrate a clear understanding of the production process: real meat being produced from animal cells without the need for slaughter. Cultivated meat is viewed not as a substitute but as "real meat made differently."

93% of consumers find cultivated meat to be relevant and perceive it as new and different, while 90% find it believable. To make sense of a category so novel, consumers actively relate it to familiar processes. Some compare it to plant growth, where a small cutting can grow and multiply when provided with the right nutrients and conditions. Others liken it to fermentation processes, such as making yoghurt or bread, while few compare it to more complex processes like IVF, describing it as "building from one cell to many." These comparisons help bridge gaps in their understanding and make the concept feel more tangible.

---

“Technology is going ahead day by day. Everything is possible nowadays. New techniques are available. So, it is believable.” -Mumbai, Female, 26–35 years

---

Cultivated meat also directly addresses many of the concerns consumers associate with conventional meat. The product is perceived as clean, safe, and produced in a controlled environment, and the absence of antibiotics and growth hormones in the end product is seen as a significant benefit.

---

“Safe. Space. Interesting. Advanced technology. I honestly thought that this is what I’ve already heard, it’s a concept from abroad. Now if it’s available in India, it’ll be quite good.” -Bangalore, Male, 36–44 years

---

### INTENT TO TRY AND PURCHASE

Consumer openness is exceptionally high, with **94% expressing an intent to try cultivated meat. However, adoption is expected to be gradual**, and consumers are likely to begin integrating cultivated meat along with conventional meat before transitioning.

---

“It will be an add-on first. And as we gradually grow accustomed to the taste, I believe it will eventually become a permanent part of our diet.” -Mumbai, Female, 26–35 years

---

Chicken emerges as the most preferred entry point, given its familiarity and versatility in local diets and cuisines. Consumers would prefer to buy cultivated meat online and to buy it raw to cook at home.

---

“I would first bring it home and verify it myself—what the texture is like, how long it takes to cook, and how clean it is.” - Delhi, Male, 18–25 years

---

### CONSUMER WILLINGNESS TO PAY

Cost is a critical factor, with expectations that cultivated meat should be priced at par with or only marginally higher than conventional meat. **Willingness to pay a premium is largely capped at 15–20% for regular consumption.**



If you are currently paying INR 100 for a certain quantity of meat, how much do you think the same quantity of cultivated meat would cost?

### Price perceptions

|                                                   |     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Less than regular meat                            | 8%  |
| About the same price as regular meat (around 100) | 15% |
| Up to 10% higher than regular meat                | 17% |
| 11-20% higher than regular meat                   | 18% |
| 21-40% higher than regular meat                   | 16% |
| 41-80% higher than regular meat                   | 13% |
| 81% or more higher than regular meat              | 10% |
| Not sure                                          | 1%  |



The chicken we consume is part of our everyday grocery basket, so we can't pay very high prices. – Delhi, Male, 18-25 years



### DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

Consumers' willingness to try cultivated meat is driven by a combination of functional benefits and reassurance factors—with protein content, health, hygiene, safety, and the absence of animal cruelty emerging as the strongest catalysts. **Over 51% view it as a good source of protein, while 46% perceive it to be healthier than regular meat. Accessibility and affordability will be equally critical drivers, with 44% citing easy availability and affordability as key enablers.**

While consumers are largely open to the concept, they have some apprehensions. Overall, **high prices and lack of accessibility emerge as the most prominent barriers.** Over 35% of consumers felt that cultivated meat would be too expensive. Availability is another practical constraint, with 27% concerned about whether cultivated meat will be easily available in nearby stores to enable regular consumption. Consumers are also uncertain of factors such as ingredients used (24%), digestibility (20%), whether the product is artificially processed (20%), safety of consumption (18%), and production process (14%).

### KEY ENABLERS OF TRUST AND ADOPTION

Trust emerges as the single most critical enabler. Consumers require validation through **regulatory approvals and safety certifications, alongside transparent communication of the production process.** Endorsements from credible experts, trusted brands, and a visible market presence, along with social validation, would further reinforce confidence in cultivated meat.

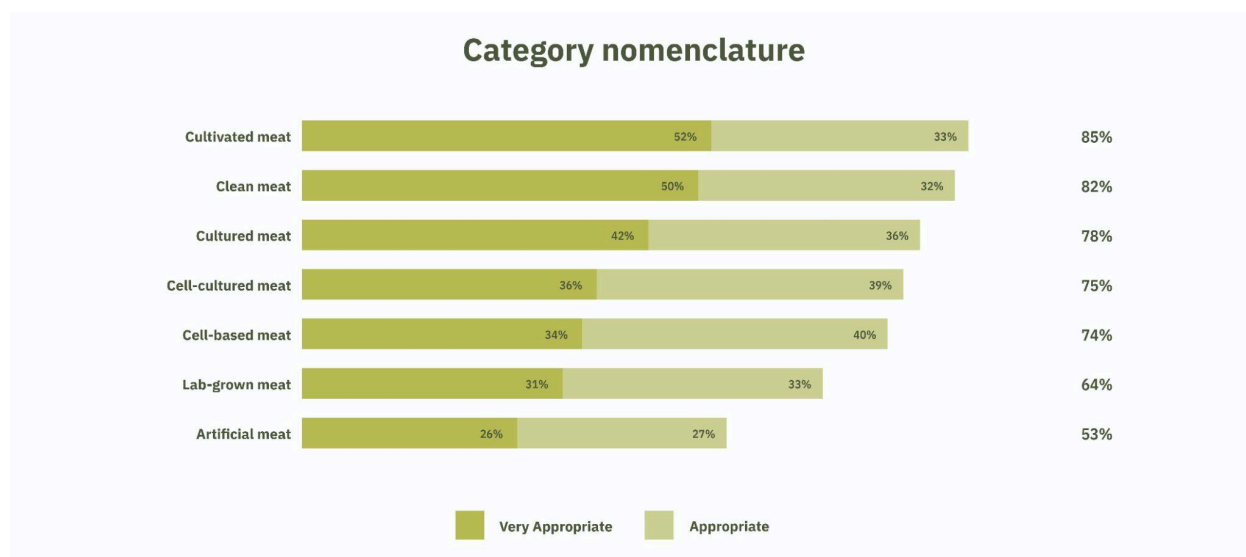
“We have the FSSAI, who gives the certification. If they give it and if it is proven from their end, I think it’s good to consume.” -Bangalore, Male, 36–44 years

## PREFERRED CATEGORY TERMINOLOGY

“Cultivated meat” emerges as the most acceptable term, with 85% of consumers rating it as appropriate. In contrast, “lab-grown meat” (64%) and especially “artificial meat” (53%) perform relatively poorly, carrying perceptions around unnaturalness and overprocessing, making them less appealing to consumers.



Based on the concept you just saw, how appropriate do you find the following terms to describe this kind of meat?



**Research methodology.** A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, comprising eight focus group discussions and 414 online interviews with younger, urban, and affluent non-vegetarians (flexitarians) aged 18–44 in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad.