

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Cloned Meat: It's What's for Dinner?

08/19/08

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/science/july-dec08/meat_8-19.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

Student Worksheet (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. What is cloning?

2. Do you think cloning animals or humans is something that should or should not be done?

3. How does the government regulate food that you buy?

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – **Student Worksheet**

1. What are the benefits of cloned meat, according to its supporters?

ANSWER

Proponents of cloning livestock, including cloning companies and some ranchers, claim that the technology would yield more consistently high quality meat.

The quality of meat from conventionally bred herds is inconsistent; some meat is destined for expensive restaurants while some may be used for dog food.

But by cloning prized livestock and using them to breed top-notch livestock, supporters claim ranchers could more reliably produce only the highest quality product.

2. What did the Food and Drug Administration say about the safety of cloned animal products?

ANSWER

After years of study, the Food and Drug Administration released a lengthy report in January stating that "food from cattle, swine and goat clones is as safe to eat as that from their more conventionally bred counterparts."

3. Why is the USDA concerned about cloned meat?

ANSWER

Despite FDA's stamp of the approval, the USDA asked the meat industry to allow time for an "an acceptance process, given the emotional nature of this issue," said Bruce Knight, the Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, after the release of the FDA report.

Knight said the USDA was not concerned about health issues, but worried that the introduction of the new product would rouse consumer concern, especially in other countries where consumers have been extremely wary about genetically modified foods.

4. Who opposes the FDA decision?

ANSWER

Critics in the United States include consumer advocacy groups, environmentalists, animal rights activists and some religious groups.

5. What are some of the reasons critics oppose the approval of cloned meat?

ANSWER

Noting that cloned animals are more likely to get sick and that the animals used to birth them are at greater risk, the chief executive of the Humane Society Chief Executive Wayne Pacelle said "the FDA did not give adequate consideration to the welfare of these animals or their surrogate mothers in its deliberations."

Even some within the cattle industry are concerned.

"It is troubling to see the FDA approval of products from cloned animals to be sold to the public, when questions surrounding the health risks, legal implications and ethical concerns remain unanswered," said Tom Buis, president of the National Farmers Union.

6. What did one study say about American opinion of cloned meat?

ANSWER

Fewer than half of the Americans polled in an industry study said they were likely to buy meat from clones if the FDA approved it. Only 10 percent said they would be "very likely" to purchase such meat.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. What do you think about both sides of the cloned meat debate? What goals are each sides trying to accomplish?

2. Would you eat cloned meat? If the FDA says that it is safe, why do so many people not believe them?

3. Why is cloning a controversial topic?

4. Do you think cloning should be legal? Why or why not?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.