Impossible Foods' response to the New York Times article

August 8, 2017

Impossible Foods takes a constructive, consumer-driven approach to solving the greatest challenge the world faces today: the inefficiency and massive environmental impact of the global food system, and the urgent threat it poses to global food and water security, and political stability. Our success depends on creating uncompromisingly great, delicious, nutritious, affordable foods that consumers love.

Since the small-scale launch of the Impossible burger, with just 50,000 lbs sold to date, we've already had an outsized impact - a taste of what's to come - overwhelmingly positive response from consumers, reduced GHG emissions of meat production equivalent to removing 246 American cars from the road for a year, reduced land footprint of meat production by an area 50% larger than Riverside Park (NYC), as much fresh water saved as 44000 average Americans drink in a year and more than 100 cows saved from slaughter.

In the interest of integrity, transparency and accountability, we need to correct several unfortunate errors in the August 8 New York Times.

For the record:

The No. 1 priority at Impossible Foods is the health and safety of our customers.

The key ingredient of the Impossible Burger -- heme -- is an ancient molecule found in every living organism. Humans have been eating heme every day for hundreds of thousands of years. The heme in the Impossible Burger is atom-for-atom identical to the heme found in meat, fish, plants and other foods.

The heme in the Impossible Burger comes from soy leghemoglobin, a protein in soy roots. Soy leghemoglobin has been extensively analyzed in rigorous safety tests by the world's leading experts on food safety and allergenicity -- and those experts have repeatedly concluded that it's safe to eat.

As noted in the article, Impossible Foods rigorously complies with federal food safety regulations and beyond compliance, is voluntarily providing its safety data to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which publishes the data online for public review. We also provide information about our products on our website and FAQ, on our product label, and to all our customers, fans and employees. People want and deserve transparency about the food they eat -- and we are giving them exactly that.

As part of our commitment to the highest standards of food safety, Impossible Foods has carried out extensive safety tests, and engaged respected, objective academics,

who are among the world's top experts in food safety and allergenicity. They have consistently and unanimously concluded that Impossible Foods' key ingredient, soy leghemoglobin, is GRAS. This "self-affirmed GRAS" status enables companies to comply with federal regulations and market food to the public, without a requirement to notify the FDA.

Impossible Foods has carefully evaluated potential allergenicity. One of the world's foremost experts on allergenicity (a co-founder and co-director of the University of Nebraska's Food Allergy Research and Resource Program) has carefully reviewed data on soy leghemoglobin and concluded that it is safe to eat and poses minimal risk for allergenicity. In addition, in an abundance of caution, we clearly label our product as containing wheat and soy -- also in compliance with federal regulations. Finally, restaurants where the Impossible Burger is sold also comply with federal regulations about labeling.

In addition to the aforementioned "self-affirmed GRAS" process, Impossible Foods voluntarily submitted a GRAS Notice to the FDA, seeking the agency's independent review and comment.

Impossible Foods has always worked constructively with the FDA, whose role as guardian of food safety for the nation we deeply respect. For instance, in response to the FDA's questions, Impossible Foods performed a comprehensive and rigorously controlled rat feeding study, in which rats consumed more than 200 times the expected level of leghemoglobin to which consumers would be exposed, every day for a month, with no adverse effects; tests with animal subjects are a traditional industry standard for food safety testing.

Impossible Foods has asked the NYT editors to correct the factual errors and misconceptions in the article.

We welcome your questions and comments.