



# SCIENTISTS INVENT 'MEATY' SPACE RICE

A LAB in South Korea has created a special type of rice that researchers say could help countries suffering from famine – and even be used as space food!

Its grains are coated with fish gelatine and contain lab-grown beef cells to make it meaty and packed with protein. It's cheaper to make and more eco-friendly than regular beef, because growing cells in the lab means you don't need to farm lots of animals.

Researcher Sohyeon Park said: "We usually get the protein we need from livestock, which consumes a lot of resources and water and releases a lot of greenhouse gas. Imagine obtaining all the nutrients we need from protein rice like this!"

The team at Yonsei University in Seoul says that, for every 100g of protein produced in the lab, their rice releases about 6.3kg of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which is eight times less than traditional beef production. They add that their rice packs in 8% more protein than regular rice and 7% more fat. It's also said to be a bit firmer to bite.

There are doubts among experts, though, over how keen people will be to try lab-grown food.

Bridget Benelam, of the British Nutrition Foundation, praised the study but isn't recommending the rice just yet. She said: "Further work would be needed if this technology were to be used as an alternative protein source to traditional animal products."



Yonsei University

Would you be happy to give up meat from farm animals to eat rice injected with lab-grown beef cells, instead?

Let us know at [first.news/polls](https://www.first.news/polls)

## Donkey slaughter banned in Africa



African leaders voted to save donkey's skins

**THE killing of donkeys for their skin has been banned across Africa.**

It was announced by leaders at a meeting of the African Union (a group including all 55 countries across the continent) in Ethiopia last weekend.

A recent report by animal welfare charity the Donkey Sanctuary had estimated that 5.9 million donkeys around the world are slaughtered every year for their skin, although it's difficult to check those numbers are correct.

Donkey skin contains a type of gelatine that is a popular ingredient in traditional Chinese medicines. It's made into something called ejiao, which is said to have the power to boost people's health and keep them looking and feeling young, but there's no proof that it works. To get it, the skin is boiled down, then the gelatine is extracted and either made into pills or liquid, or added to food.

The donkey population in China plummeted as a result of the demand for ejiao, and this put donkeys in other countries at risk.

"At first our governments saw this as an opportunity [to sell donkey skins to China], and many legal slaughterhouses opened in Africa," Dr Solomon Onyango, from the Donkey Sanctuary, told the BBC. He said that between 2016 and 2019, half of all the donkeys in Kenya were killed for their skin.

A lot of rural communities in Africa rely on living donkeys for their livelihood, both for transport and for carrying things. There are said to be around 53 million donkeys in the world, and two-thirds of them live in Africa.

## Rise in attacks on Jewish pupils



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak speaks to pupils at a Jewish school in Barnet

**THE war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas has triggered a massive increase in abuse of Jewish people in the UK – including children.**

Israel is a Jewish country. On 7 October, Hamas, the group that controls Gaza, invaded Israel, killing more than 1,000 people and taking others hostage. Since then, Israel has bombarded Gaza with rockets. Hamas sources say more than 29,000 people in Gaza have died, including over 10,000 children.

The Community Security Trust (CST) is a group that monitors anti-Semitism (incidents of hatred towards Jewish people) in the UK. It says that in the 12-week period from the start of the war on 7 October until the end of 2023, there were 2,699 incidents of anti-Semitism in the UK. That's a massive 589% increase on the 392 incidents that were recorded during the same period in 2022.

In other words, there were over five times more anti-Semitism incidents than the year before.

Some of those incidents involve attacks on schoolchildren. In 2023, the CST recorded 87 incidents of anti-Semitism towards Jewish pupils and staff at Jewish schools and 127 at non-religious schools. A further 111 incidents involved Jewish children outside of school.

Mark Gardner, the chief executive of the CST, said: "The explosion in hatred against our community is an absolute disgrace. It occurs in schools, universities, workplaces, on the streets and social media."

James Cleverly, the home secretary, said the Government has increased funding for security at Jewish schools. Labour's Yvette Cooper said: "We must not allow events unfolding internationally to play out in increased hatred and prejudice here in our communities."

## British Gas profits sky-rocket

**THE boss of British Gas has called on the Government to help poorer customers to receive cheaper bills for their energy.**

Centrica, the company that owns British Gas, said this month that the business made a profit of £751m in 2023 – that's over £650m more than it got in 2022.

The soaring profits have led people to question whether it's fair that big energy companies make such a lot of money at a time when many people are struggling to pay their bills during the cost of living crisis. A lot of customers would prefer to see lower bills, instead.

Centrica chief executive Chris O'Shea said: "The poorest in society are really struggling, but it's not just the energy. It's energy, it's rent, it's mortgages, it's food and all manner of costs."

He suggested a 'social tariff' for energy. This would see the Government cover some of the costs so that people receiving benefits are given cheaper bills. There are already social tariffs in place for mobile, broadband and water bills.

"I think that's the best thing we can do for consumers," he said. "That will reduce the cost for the poorest in society, the people that are really, really struggling."



**ASTRONOMERS have identified the brightest object ever seen!**

Using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope (VLT), stargazers studied the core of a very distant galaxy, known as a quasar, called J0529-4351.

It's powered by a fast-growing black hole and is over 500 trillion times more luminous than our sun! It's so far away that its light takes 12 billion years to reach Earth.