

## **Brief: Impossible Foods could sell proprietary heme to other companies – CEO Brown**

June 25, 2021 Jack Ellis

Impossible Foods is open to selling or licensing its proprietary ‘heme’ ingredient to other food companies in the future, founder and CEO Patrick Brown has said at an online event.

“We have absolutely no aversion to doing that [...] We just haven’t had the bandwidth to really think about those alternative business models,” he is quoted as saying by FoodNavigator. “[But] I am more than willing to do anything that will actually accelerate the availability and competitiveness of plant-based foods across the board, and I wouldn’t be at all surprised if we go in that direction in a couple of years.”

Why it matters:

Impossible Foods claims that its synthesized soy leghemoglobin, or ‘heme’ — which it produces via fermentation using extracts from soybean roots — is the secret sauce that differentiates its faux-beef products from those offered by competitors.

The San Francisco-based company says that the compound plays a key role in the umami flavor profile of its meat substitute products, in addition to providing its Impossible Burger with the characteristic ability to ‘bleed’ like rare-cooked beef.

An advocacy group, the Center for Food Safety, filed suit in a US federal court earlier this year, challenging the Food & Drug Administration’s (FDA) 2019 approval of Impossible’s soy leghemoglobin for human consumption. The court upheld the FDA’s approval in a non-precedential decision issued last month.