THE MAGICAL SCIENCE OF BEANS

We already know the pink slime issue has been engaged in a full court press (even while the pink slime company itself declared bankruptcy). So it's not surprising to see even the science press parroting the talking points being pushed by the pink slime industry. Sure, it concedes that pink slime might be unappetizing, but it hews to countering the straw man argument that the ammonia—rather than the underlying conditions that require the ammonia—makes the pink slime unsafe.

> If you've eaten a hamburger in the last 50 years, you've eaten pink slime. And if you've eaten breakfast cereals, cheeses, custard, mustard, macaroni salad, potato salad or a whole host of other products that Americans eat each and every day, there's a good chance that ammonia was added. That knowledge may not make our food very appetizing to the newly informed American consumer, but it doesn't make the food less safe.

The rest of the column, though, spins the pink slime industry as a rational response to the challenge of feeding an expanding population.

> The patent, which was eventually granted to Armour and Company in 1962, is a rather unappetizing read for modern eyes, describing the "finely divided meat slurry" which is "mechanically separated by centrifugation." But the problem that this patent was trying to solve was a serious and urgent one: how do we feed as many people as possible, as nutritiously as possible, while producing less waste?
>
> Thanks to America's baby boom following World War II, one of the most daunting challenges of the 1950s and '60s was

> figuring out how to feed millions of new mouths. Even the most optimistic futurist thinkers knew that America's rapidly growing population would require much more efficient methods of production if there was to be enough food to go around.

Note, it's Science Digest writer Matt Novak who calls this a daunting challenge, not the scientists and capitalists of the day. And he does so even while hinting at a very simple solution to this "daunting" challenge.

> The realization that beef is a terribly inefficient way to provide Americans with protein was recognized even before the 1970s. The 1957 book "The Next Hundred Years," written by Harrison Brown, James Bonner and John Weir, includes a graph which lays out the different protein returns one can expect from raising beef or milk or soybeans. Spoiler alert: Beef is the least efficient.

Stop. End of article. You've solved your daunting problem!

Beans.

Now, frankly, I love beef—and love eating it when I can vouch for the conditions in which it was raised and slaughtered.

But I don't kid myself. At times when tight budgets have forced me to find more economical ways of eating, I did what billions on the planet do: choose plant-based proteins over the very extravagant (both in terms of real and environmental cost) beef. It doesn't take a science degree to understand this (though it does take the ability to read through meat industry propaganda).

Now, Science Digest may—in the interest of earning enough money to pay for their

extravagant beef—be willing to spin in such shameless fashion. But all the meat pills and pink slime and other invented technological fixes for a very simple problem have not been able to compete with the wonderful magical bean, either in health benefits or safety.

Next up? While calling for a Congressional investigation into the nefarious plot that exposed how gross pink slime is, IA Governor Terry Branstad also offered pink slime as a solution for obesity.