

Healthy Bottom Line

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Beyond Meat is having its moment

By Amanda Little
Bloomberg Opinion

At a time when most food producers are facing disruption, Ethan Brown is high on the hog. Well, the hogless hog. Brown is the founder and CEO of Beyond Meat, a protein company that sells plant-based meat products — burgers, sausages, ground “beef” and fried “chicken” — to U.S. retail stores, including Target and Whole Foods, and major food chains worldwide, such as KFC, Carl’s Jr., Dunkin’ Donuts and Starbucks.

Following a funding windfall from investors including Bill Gates and Tyson Foods, Beyond Meat went public in May 2019. Its stock price quadrupled by July 2019, hitting \$234 per share at its height, before tumbling to \$75 in January 2020 and now sitting at \$128. Despite the swings in valuation, the company’s earnings climbed 140%, from \$40 million in Q1 2019 to \$97 million in Q1 of this year. When the pandemic hit, earnings more than doubled. I spoke with Brown at his office in Los Angeles about how he’s keeping pace with the demand, and how climate change and Covid-19 have spurred trends in ethical eating. Here’s a lightly edited transcript of our exchange.

Amanda Little: Describe the growth at Beyond Meat and what’s been driving it.

Ethan Brown: We are seeing a few trends at once that are advantageous: More households are buying more of our products, more often and in more retail outlets. We’ve also more than doubled our food service penetration. While we skew a little toward retail, 42% of our sales are now in food service. And we’re seeing strong international growth: We’re in 75 countries worldwide, and international sales jumped nearly 5,000% from last year.

What’s driving it? First and foremost, consumer health concerns associated with animal protein. There was a World Health Organization analysis in 2015 and a number of university studies since that have showed processed meat is carcinogenic. There’s also increasing public awareness of animal welfare and growing concern about climate change and natural resources.



Beyond Meat founder Ethan Brown in 2019 at the company’s research center and test kitchen in El Segundo, Calif. (Carolyn Cole/Los Angeles Times/TNS)

Our burgers have a fraction of the environmental impact — using 99% less water, 90% lower greenhouse gas emissions, 93% less land and about half the energy required to produce beef from an animal.

AL: What has happened to your growth since early March, when Covid-19 began to hit hard in the U.S.?

EB: Our retail sales were up 233% for the four-week

period ending March 22, 2020, outperforming the plant-based meat category as a whole, which rose 93%. What I did not anticipate was the disruptive pricing that would occur in the animal-protein market this year. We’ve seen significant run-ups in the wholesale and retail costs of beef in a short period of time.

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Pandemic leads to a bicycle boom, and shortage, around world

By David Sharp
and Kelvin Chan
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — Fitness junkies locked out of gyms, commuters fearful of public transit, and families going stir crazy inside their homes during the coronavirus pandemic have created a boom in bicycle sales unseen in decades.

In the United States, bicycle aisles at mass merchandisers like Walmart and Target have been swept clean, and independent shops are doing a brisk business and are selling out of affordable “family” bikes.

Bicycle sales over the past two months saw their biggest spike in the U.S. since the oil crisis of the 1970s, said Jay Townley, who analyzes cycling industry trends at Human Powered Solutions.

“People quite frankly have panicked, and they’re buying bikes like toilet paper,” Townley said, referring to the rush to buy essentials like toilet paper and hand sanitizer that stores saw at the beginning of the pandemic.

The trend is mirrored around the globe, as cities better known for car-clogged streets, like Manila and Rome, install bike lanes to accommodate surging interest in cycling while public transport remains curtailed. In London, municipal authorities plan to go further by banning cars from some central thoroughfares.

Bike shop owners in the Philippine capital say demand is stronger than at Christmas. Financial incentives are boosting sales in Italy, where the government’s post-lockdown stimulus last month included a 500-euro (\$575) “bici bonus” rebate for up to 60% of the cost of a bike.

But that’s if you can get your hands on one. The craze has led to shortages that will take some weeks, maybe months, to resolve, particularly in the U.S., which relies on China for about 90% of its bicycles, Townley said. Production there was largely shut down due to the coronavirus and is just resuming.

The bicycle rush kicked off in mid-March around the time countries were shutting their borders, businesses were closing, and stay-at-home orders were being imposed to slow the spread of the coronavirus that has infected millions of people and killed more than 450,000.

Sales of adult leisure bikes tripled in April while overall U.S. bike sales, including kids’ and electric-assist bicycles, doubled from the year before, according to market research firm NPD Group, which tracks retail bike sales.

It’s a far cry from what was anticipated in the U.S. The \$6 billion industry had projected lower sales based on lower volume in 2019 in which punitive tariffs on bicycles produced in China reached 25%.

There are multiple reasons for the pandemic bicycle boom.

Around the world, many workers were looking for an alternative to buses and subways. People unable to go to their gyms looked for another way to exercise. And shut-in families scrambled to find a way to keep kids active during stay-at-home orders.

“Kids are looking for something to do. They’ve probably reached the end of the internet by now, so you’ve got to get out and do something,” said Dave Palese at Gorham Bike and Ski, a Maine shop where

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On Tuesday, June 9, Harvey Curtis, left, discusses repair plans with customer Jack Matheson outside Sidecountry Sports, a bike shop in Rockland, Maine. Matheson is looking forward to getting his 40-year-old Raleigh back on the road. (AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty)



Above: On Wednesday, April 8, bicyclists wear pandemic masks while riding in Portland, Maine. (AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty)



Left: In this June 2020 photo, bike display racks are empty at a Walmart in Falmouth, Maine. (AP Photo/David Sharp)

Bicycles

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there are slim pickings for family-oriented, leisure bikes. Bar Harbor restaurateur Brian Smith bought a new bike for one of his daughters, a competitive swimmer, who was unable to get into the pool. On a recent day, he was heading back to his local bike shop to outfit his youngest daughter, who'd just learned how to ride.

His three daughters use their bikes every day, and the entire family goes for rides a couple of times a week. The fact that they're getting exercise and enjoying fresh air is a bonus.

"It's fun. Maybe that's the bottom line. It's really fun to ride bikes," Smith said as he and his 7-year-old daughter, Ellery, pedaled to the bicycle shop.

The pandemic is also driving a boom in electric-assist bikes, called e-bikes, which were a niche part of the overall market until now. Most e-bikes require a cyclist to pedal, but electric motors provide extra oomph.

VanMoof, a Dutch e-bike maker, is seeing "unlimited demand" since the pandemic began, resulting in a 10-week order backlog for its commuter electric bikes, compared with typical one-day delivery time, said co-founder Taco Carlier.

The company's sales surged 138% in the U.S. and rocketed 184% in Britain in the February-April period over last year, with big gains in other European countries. The company is scrambling to ramp up production as fast as it can, but it will take two to three months to meet the demand, Carlier said.

"We did have some issues with our supply chain back in January, February when the crisis hit first in Asia," said Carlier. But "the issue is now with demand, not supply."

Sales at Cowboy, a Belgian e-bike maker, tripled in the January-April period from last year. Notably, they spiked in Britain and France at around the same time in May that those countries started easing lockdown restrictions, said Chief Marketing Officer Benoit Simeray.

"It's now becoming very obvious for most of us living in and around cities that we don't want to go back into public transportation," said Simeray. But people may still need to buy groceries or commute to the office one or two days a week, so "then they're starting to really, really think about electric bikes as the only solution they've got."

In Maine, Kate Worcester, a physician's assistant, bought e-bikes for herself and her 12-year-old son so they could have fun at a time when she couldn't travel far from the hospital where she worked.

Every night, she and her son ride 20 miles or 30 miles (30 or 50 kilometers) around Acadia National Park.

"It's by far the best fun I've had with him," she said. "That's been the biggest silver lining in this terrible pandemic — to be able to leave work and still do an activity and talk and enjoy each other."

Joe Minutolo, co-owner of Bar Harbor Bicycle Shop, said he hopes the sales surge translates into long-term change.

"People are having a chance to rethink things," he said. "Maybe we'll all learn something out of this, and something really good will happen."

Chan reported from London. Joael Calupitan in Manila and Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed to this story.

Beyond

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AL: Your products are still quite a bit more expensive than conventional meats.

EB: Yes. We set a goal over a year ago to underprice animal protein within five years. Because of progress and the recent price spikes in meat, we're much closer to the goal. Of course, they'll be able to moderate the price of animal meats somewhat, but we now know the vulnerability of the system. It's a crucial moment. There's no question that we'll be able to underprice animal protein. Instead of feeding plants to cows for 18 months or to pigs for 6 months, we're taking the protein right from the plant in a matter of minutes, restructuring that protein to the form of animal muscle. We should be cheaper than animal meats, and we will be.

AL: How will you maintain this growth after the pandemic?

EB: Our household penetration in the U.S. is still only at 4%. So even with this growth we're just scratching the surface. In retail, we only have eight stock keeping units (individual products); we should, and will one day, have dozens of SKUs. We also feel good about our long-term prospects in food service. Take the U.S. market as an example — there are some 650,000 restaurants. We are in less than 10% of them. So, in both retail and domestic food service, there's lots of room for growth. And then, of course, there are international markets. We very much view this as the beginning of our growth.

AL: Walk me through the logistical challenges of this rapid growth. How are you keeping pace with demand?

EB: I feel very equipped to deal with this growth — it's as if we've been waiting and preparing for this moment. That's reflected in the hiring on our executive team. For example, Sanjay Shah, our COO, who joined eight months ago, had been at Amazon where he managed significant growth at North American fulfillment centers. He has deep experience in scaling and operating high-growth businesses. My chief growth officer is from Coca-Cola. The examples go on and on. We've also made significant investments in production facilities here and in Europe.

AL: What's your take on the recent swings in your stock valuation?

EB: I don't comment on short-term stock valuation.

AL: Your competitor, Impossible Foods, built its brand in restaurants and fast-food chains, whereas you built your brand first in retail. That's been a notable advantage during the pandemic.

EB: It has. We actually began by selling in food service — mainly hospitals and universities in the Mid-Atlantic along with the prepared foods section at Whole Foods — and when we tried to expand to restaurants, we failed at first. So we maintained our focus on retail while we tried to make more progress in the restaurant space, and ultimately our success in retail — we're now in 25,000 U.S. stores — drove our success in food service. It was important to me to build our brand and products in dialogue with the consumer. When we first started selling in Whole Foods stores, I spent a lot of time talking to consumers who were

sampling or buying our products in and around Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, often off the beaten path and in smaller markets. You learn a tremendous amount from the consumer about what they want in a product — simple plant-based ingredients and nothing genetically modified — when you just are willing to listen to them.

AL: There's been a backlash against plant-based meats — consumer concerns that the products are highly processed and unhealthy. How are you addressing this?

EB: There are well-financed camps (in the conventional meat industry) that continue to feed the confusion. Here's the thing: We are really proud of the ingredients we use, the process we use, so it's not like we're scratching our heads, thinking, "how do we spin this?" We source our proteins, fats, minerals and carbohydrates directly from plants — with no GMOs, nothing artificial and less saturated fat. Our ingredient list is longer because we have to list the component parts of making our meat — sources of our amino acids, fats and vitamins. We don't have luxury of just writing "beef." We're doing a lot of outreach to customers to educate them on our ingredients. I have also said that consumers are more than welcome to stop by our facilities in Missouri and see how the food is made. I stand by that. It seems like a basic right, no?

AL: Impossible Foods CEO Pat Brown has said by 2035 we'll see the end of animal meat. Do you agree?

EB: I don't share that perspective. I would say: I don't know. It's all up to the consumer. If we get the products to be indistinguishable from animal protein, we provide nutritional advantage — more protein, more iron, no cholesterol, lower saturated fats, and if we drop the price below animal protein, it becomes in my view a minority of consumers that says, "I just don't want to eat this." But I don't see the need to be adversarial. It's a distraction, a red herring, to make it us versus them.

AL: Is it reasonable to compare this moment in plant-based meats to the birth of tech industries — I'm thinking cell phones in the mid-1990s — which faced volatility at the outset but then became engrained?

EB: Think about the earliest computers and how big and expensive they were. Density and cost-curves improved them and enabled mass adoption, just like with mobile phones. We're on a similar trajectory: Our products and platforms are getting better, and our costs will over time decline as we scale. For us, the path to mass accessibility centers on taste, nutrition and cost. The convergence of improved quality (taste and nutrition) and competitive pricing on the one hand, and these powerful trends in consumer behavior on the other, create a powerful moment for change.

AL: Going forward, things will get harder for livestock producers. The pandemic has been devastating for many and climate change will put increasing pressure on their operations.

EB: I think a lot about how many American farmers are hurting. The digital revolution over the last 30 years did very little to benefit the family farmer. We have a technology and approach that can empower farmers to make more money growing protein-rich plants and help bring economic prosperity back to rural America.

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Create a Safe Sleep Environment for Baby

Did you know that the features of your baby's sleep area can affect his/her risk for **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)** and other sleep-related causes of infant death, such as suffocation?

Reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death by creating a safe sleep environment for your baby.

How can you make a **safe sleep environment**?

-  ▶ Always place baby **on his or her back** to sleep for all sleep times, including naps.
-  ▶ **Room share**—keep baby's sleep area in the *same* room next to your sleep area. Your baby should not sleep in an adult bed, on a couch, or on a chair alone, with you, or with anyone else.
-  ▶ Use a **firm sleep surface**, such as a mattress in a safety-approved* crib, bassinet, or portable play area, covered by a fitted sheet.
-  ▶ Keep soft objects, toys, pillows, crib bumpers, and loose bedding **out of your baby's sleep area**.
-  ▶ **Don't let baby get too hot during sleep.** Dress your baby in no more than one layer more of clothing than an adult would wear to be comfortable. A one-piece sleeper or wearable blanket can be used.

*Visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website for more information about safety-approved baby sleep areas: <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/cribs/>



Learn more about ways to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death at

<http://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov>

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Scotland County Health Department is pleased to announce we are now offering Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs) as a method of birth control. These contraceptives include Intrauterine devices (IUDs) and birth control implants. Examples include Mirena (IUD) and Nexplanon (Implant). LARCs are an effective way of preventing pregnancy for 3-5 years upon insertion, without the need to take a daily pill. "We are excited to be able to offer these methods of birth control to any new or current patient at Scotland County Health Department which will allow us to better serve the people in our community," stated Kristen Patterson, Health Director.

For more information about Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives, to determine eligibility, or to make an appointment, please call the Scotland County Health Department at 910-277-2440 or 910-277-2470 ext. 4466.

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Adopted a dog while in quarantine? ‘Dog Whisperer’ César Millán has some tips

By Jeanette Marantos
Los Angeles Times

When the stay-at-home orders began in mid-March, many Americans made beelines for their local animal shelters to either foster or adopt adorable dogs.

All over the country, shelters normally faced with the terrible task of euthanizing unwanted animals because their kennels were overflowing were able to happily report that their cages were nearly bare.

Dog trainer-to-the stars and animal behaviorist Cesar Millan — you know him as the “Dog Whisperer” — has no doubt that the dogs were fostered or adopted into loving homes. His question is whether these new pet parents are committed to the long-term task of caring for their new family members, a commitment that requires more discipline and mental stimulation than a steady diet of kisses and treats.

In May, L.A. municipal animal shelter officials said they were worried about a resurgence in pet drop-offs, in part because of COVID-19 job losses that have made it difficult for people to afford pets. Los Angeles Animal Services announced June 3 that they were opening two pet food pantries. Assistance is by appointment only at the city agency’s shelters in Chesterfield Square and East Valley.

Adopting a dog to keep you company in isolation “is like getting married for all the wrong reasons or having children for the wrong reasons,” said Millan, who will begin filming another 10 episodes of his popular “Dog Whisperer” TV show in July. “When the human response is to think of yourself first, then the outcome in the future is not going to be good.”

If someone has a puppy and that puppy is a problem, “then the owner wasn’t honest from the beginning,” Millan said. “People say, ‘I’m going to get a puppy. (But) I don’t know what I’m doing. I don’t know if I want to care for them for 13 or 14 years, and I don’t know how much it will cost ... I just know I want a puppy.’ Dogs hold on to honor, integrity, loyalty, trust, respect and love ... so that puppy knew the moral code was broken from the moment it was adopted.”

Dogs are pack animals that instinctively look for a leader, and if their humans don’t provide that leadership then the dogs get confused and lose respect, especially if their bad behaviors are “rewarded” with endless treats and affection.

Dogs basically have three reactions, he said — fight, flight (or avoidance) and submission or surrender. Submission is the place you want them to be, because nobody listens when they’re in fight or flight mode.

Millan worries that many new dog owners don’t know these things and that they may be getting frustrated with their pets because of their pesky behaviors or the time it takes to walk them every day. Maybe the humans are planning to return to work soon and their dogs are causing trouble at home, especially when they’re gone.

The trick, Millan said, isn’t in training the dogs but ourselves. “I train people,” he said, “and rehabilitate dogs. I try to bring consciousness to the humans.”

For instance, Americans tend to smother their dogs with affection. That makes the owners happy but



SANTA CLARITA, CA- JUNE 2020: Dog trainer Cesar Millan goes for a walk on his ranch in Santa Clarita, Calif. with a variety of dogs, a miniature horse, a goat and a macaw. All the animals and bird belong to Millan except for the great dane, that was visiting. (Mel Melcon/Los Angeles Times/TNS)

doesn’t do much for their pets. “Dogs in third world countries are skinny, but they don’t have psychological problems,” Millan said. “My clients all have empathy and compassion — love is not the problem. But they’re not giving their dogs any exercise or mental stimulation.”

Bottom line: The biggest problem with problem dogs is the ignorance of their owners, said Millan. But don’t lose heart. Because your dog is committed to the relationship, you can turn things around by putting its needs first — body, mind and heart, a.k.a. exercise, discipline and affection — in that order.

“That’s how the Marines do it. That’s how Olympians do it,” Millan said. “The celebration happens after the body and mind have been taken care of.”

Here are the Dog Whisperer’s 5 tips for having the chilliest pup in the neighborhood:

1. EXERCISE FIRST

The first thing many dog owners do in the morning is drag out the kibble and feed their antsy dogs, maybe let them out to pee for a few minutes and then race off to work. But that’s not what the dog needs, “Dog Whisperer” Cesar Millan said. When your dog wakes up the morning, the first thing it needs is to stretch and then walk — not eat.

“Imagine sending all the kids in the world to Chuck E. Cheese first thing in the morning, and then asking them to behave,” he said. “If you give me Chuck E. Cheese in the morning and leave me alone, I’m going to destroy your entire house, because you left me excited, not tired.”

By walking your dog first, for at least 45 minutes, you are giving your pet a chance to expend its pent-up energy, stimulate its mind and “earn” its food, Millan said. Breakfast comes after the walk — “You feed them because they earned it; you’re giving them their paycheck.”

2. WHO’S THE BOSS?

Taking a walk is also a good time to establish that you are the leader of your pack. This means teaching the dog that it stops when you want to stop and walks next to or behind you, instead of pulling or yanking you along. The trick is in controlling the dog’s nose, Millan said.

Using a leash like the Gentle Leader will keep the dog from sniffing everything as it goes along, until you say it’s OK to stop and sniff or relieve itself. If the dog can stop and sniff at will, “you’ve lost them. If humans lose the nose, they lose control.”

3. WORK THEM WELL

Millan recommends at least 45 minutes of morning walking for older, lower energy dogs and up to two hours for high energy dogs. What if you have a combination of both? Millan used to have 65 dogs at his Santa Clarita ranch, and he learned that the high energy dogs needed extra weight to slow them down so they didn’t leave the slower ones behind.

So if you have a high-energy dog, give it a backpack to wear during walks, filled with something soft, like rice, dried beans or sand, that is the equivalent to 50% of their weight. (So a 22-pound dog would carry 11 pounds). “That way, a one-hour walk turns into (the equivalent of) a two-hour workout for a high-energy dog.”

4. KEEP THINGS CALM

When you return home at night, don’t immediately jump up and down with your dog. Start a ritual of calm. “If that’s how you welcome your dog every night, with him jumping on you and barking, he’s going to do that with everyone who comes in the door,” Millan said. Instead, when you walk in, let your dogs smell you but don’t acknowledge them, touch them or make eye contact for many minutes, until they are calm.

“By practicing calmness, he’s learning how to read people. He has all that eight to 10 hours of accumulated boredom, anxiety and frustration from being inside all day, but he can learn how to meet people in a calm way. And once he relaxes completely, then you can hug him, give him a treat and go back to being calm.”

5. CHOOSE TOYS WISELY

This shouldn’t be a news flash to anyone who’s been staying home the last three months, but things can get pretty boring when you’re home alone all day. Boredom and anxiety can lead to less-than-desirable behaviors, such as incessant barking or chewing up the furniture. The trick is finding toys that stimulate a dog’s mind, such as Nina Ottosson puzzle games and other “brain toys,” and changing them up regularly so your dog doesn’t get bored.

Avoid squeaky toys, which can cause dogs to go into a frenzy, Millan said: “Now you’re bringing the animal out. To them, it’s the equivalent of hunting, so they’re killing and not playing anymore. We want to have toys that bring out the domesticated stuff, where the dog regains its calm and surrender, its happy-go-lucky state of play.”

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Understanding your sunscreen options



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From Mayo Clinic News Network

The best sunscreen is one that you'll use generously and according to label directions. Here's help understanding sunscreen ingredients, types of sunscreen and more.

What are the most important things to know about protecting yourself from the sun?

Focus on the big picture when it comes to sun safety. For example:

Avoid the sun during peak hours. Generally, this is between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. _ regardless of season. These are prime hours for exposure to skin-damaging ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun, even on overcast days.

Wear protective clothing. This includes pants, shirts with long sleeves, sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat.

Use sunscreen. Apply sunscreen generously and reapply regularly. Research supports the benefits of using sunscreen to minimize skin damage from the sun's rays.

What does a broad-spectrum sunscreen do? There are two types of UV light that can harm your skin _ UVA and UVB. A broad-spectrum, or full-spectrum, sunscreen protects you from both.

UVA rays can prematurely age your skin, causing wrinkling and age spots. UVB rays can burn your skin. Too much exposure to UVA or UVB rays can cause skin cancer. The best sunscreen offers protection from all UV light.

Does the best sunscreen have the highest SPF? SPF stands for sun protection factor, a measure of how well sunscreen protects against UVB rays. (UVA protection isn't rated.) Manufacturers calculate SPF based on how long it takes to sunburn skin that's been treated with the sunscreen as compared to skin with no sunscreen.

When applied correctly, a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 will provide slightly more protection from UVB rays than does a sunscreen with an SPF of 15. But the SPF 30 product isn't twice as protective as the SPF 15 product. Sunscreens with SPFs greater than 50 provide only a small increase in UV protection.

Also, sunscreen is often not applied thoroughly or thickly enough, and it can be washed off during swimming or sweating. As a result, even the best sunscreen might be less effective than the SPF number suggests.

Rather than looking at a sunscreen's SPF, choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen.

This article is written by Mayo Clinic Staff. Find more health and medical information on mayoclinic.org. (Mayo Clinic News Network is your source for health news, advances in research and wellness tips.)

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