

To all the meat I sliced before.  
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**The  
Counter**

**Thinly Sliced**



## 01 New public records reveal Covid-19 hunger relief contractors get handsome payouts for mediocre food boxes

The Farmers to Families Food Box program has failed to deliver on its promises. President Trump just announced \$1 billion in fresh funding.

by Jessica Fu + H. Claire Brown [Read more](#)

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## 02 Black farmers sue Monsanto to stop sales of Roundup

Despite numerous jury settlements over the controversial pesticide,

plaintiffs claim Monsanto's parent company has made no "effort to get Roundup off the shelf."

by Johnathan Hettinger [Read more](#)

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## Eating In



**03 I was one of Kathy's Deli's first employees. When it closed forever during the pandemic, I wondered if I'd lost my teenage self.**

"My growing up had taken place at Kathy's, in the stories that cooks handed off like sheet pans."



by Sylvia Grove [Read more](#)

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**04 I'm a 39-year-old man who has struggled with his weight for a decade. It's an odd time to start getting thin.**

“I noticed that the weight came off faster merely for the fact that I wasn’t eating in restaurants or blindly grabbing a snack between classes.”

by Nate Brown [Read more](#)

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# The Latest

Short dispatches from food's front lines, selected by our editors each week.

**Low buzz.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on Monday announced it would not ensure the protection of habitats that endangered bumblebees call home. This is despite a [sharp decline](#) in rusty patched bumblebee populations, and their shrinking presence across North America. The government can help endangered species recover by designating certain areas as “critical habitat,” which requires federal regulators to factor habitat protection into permitting decisions. In its announcement, FWS said that climate change and pesticides—not habitat loss—drive bumblebee population declines, the Associated Press [reported](#). Environmental groups have indicated they’ll likely sue FWS over the move.

**Deforestation-ly.** Before you dump your Oatly: No, the company is not planting oat fields in the Amazon or chopping down old-growth forests to shore up its rapeseed oil supply. Nevertheless, the darling oat milk brand was taken to task on social media this week after a climate activist disclosed it had received a \$200-million investment from Blackstone Group, a firm that also invests in Brazilian companies linked to deforestation. *Vice* reports that some of the brand's fans called for a boycott online; the company responded that "it's about moving the world's capital towards green investment." Our question is: Did Oatly's Instagram fans *really* think the company was going to raise \$200 million in squeaky clean money? If yes, we'd love to know who's buying ...

**3D-printed steaks.** The Israeli startup Redefine Meat has created another contender in the growing faux-meat market. The alternative meat company makes 3D-printed vegan "steaks," a cut of [alternative meat](#) that has yet to hit store shelves, *Business Insider* reports. The company is working to develop a product that functions in the same way any beef cut would: "roasted," "grilled" ... you name it. Redefine Meat's CEO Eschar Ben-Shitrit wants to establish industrial-level 3D printers for its products, requiring less water and energy and [dispensing](#) fewer fossil fuels than livestock. While the company won't disclose how much each printer costs, they intend to keep steak prices comparable to the market at a range of \$5 to \$12 per pound.

**McDonald's goes to court, again.** McDonald's Corp. is being sued by a group of 50 Black former franchisees who say they were pushed to run less profitable locations in inner-city areas and weren't given the same financial help as their white counterparts. Lawyers representing the plaintiffs [told](#) *Crain's Chicago Business* that these factors limited Black franchisees' ability to expand and grow, which "led to financial ruin." The lawsuit comes at the helm of a national racial reckoning and a push for

individuals and corporations to take responsibility for racial discrimination. The complaint was filed Tuesday in Chicago federal court. McDonald's also fell under scrutiny earlier this year when 5,000 women joined a class action [lawsuit](#) claiming they experienced sexual harassment while working for the corporation.

**Peanut possession.** Nestlé is buying the maker of a peanut allergy drug for \$2.6 billion. Aimmune (AIMT) is a California-based biotechnology firm that received USDA approval for Palforzia, a drug designed to help children build up their immune response to peanuts, [CNN reports](#). Nestlé, the world's largest food and beverage company, has now made multiple investments into researching and developing food allergy-related products via its Nestlé Health Sciences division.

**Hanging on the telephone.** Competition for delivery driver jobs at Whole Foods and Amazon in Chicago has become so fierce that some are taking extreme measures to ensure they get first dibs at orders—by hanging smartphones up near stores and dispatch centers, [according to a Bloomberg investigation](#). The proximity of the dangling phones to delivery centers combined with other software hacks allows drivers to grab deliveries first, seconds before others in the network are pinged. These cutthroat tactics are yet another example of how the gig economy is vastly flooded with the unemployed due to the pandemic. “They’re gaming the system in a way that makes it harder for Amazon to figure it out,” a wireless expert told Bloomberg. “They’re just a step ahead of Amazon’s algorithm and its developers.”

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