

# The coming global domination of chicken

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Soon-to-be the world's favorite meat. (David Paul Morris/Bloomberg News)

By [Roberto A. Ferdman](#)

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Pork's reign is all but over.

Poultry is expected to become the world's most consumed meat over the next 5 years, [according to a report](#) (pdf) released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development last week. The world's appetite for chicken is growing faster than any other meat, while pork consumption is slowing even in its most popular markets.

"Currently, pork accounts for the greatest share in world total meat production, however, a comparatively slower growth rate through the next decade will result in it being surpassed by poultry by 2020," the report says.

The trend is expected to hold true for just about every region and country — developed or developing.

Why?

To begin with, it's the cheapest and most accessible meat in the world. What's more, that's likely to persist: both bovine and pig meat prices are expected to well outpace those of poultry going forward.

It also happens to be free of the sort of cultural barriers that affect pig meat. It's of little coincidence that some of the world's largest chicken eating countries per capita are those that consume almost no pork at all — namely, Malaysia, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, according to the OECD. "Poultry faces few cultural barriers related to its consumption, resulting in robust consumption growth across geographical areas," the report says. "This combination of factors results in poultry accounting for half of the additional meat consumed by 2023."

The bad news is that the poultry industry has been tied to a growing number of animal rights' violations. In the U.S., chickens and turkeys are not afforded the same [legal protections against abusive treatment](#) in slaughterhouses that cattle and swine enjoy.

The good news is that the poultry industry is much kinder to the environment than that of most every other kind of meat. Per kilogram consumed, chicken's carbon footprint is roughly half that of pork, a quarter that of beef, and nearly a seventh that of lamb, according to a recent study by the Environmental Working Group.

"If every American stopped eating beef tomorrow — which I don't expect — and started eating chicken instead, that would be the equivalent of taking 26 million cars off the road," the study said.

