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edible. We hear a chorus of commentary stating that horsemeat is edible, even a delicacy, and that much of the current sensationalist journalism surrounding the scandal reflects a particularly British discomfort or squeamishness with eating horsemeat. That hippophagy is not uncommon in other countries, including many European ones implicated in the scandal, some say, is evidence that Brits should get over it, or get outside their comfort zone.

This kind of food relativism is beside the point. Many find eating horsemeat reprehensible. It is not so difficult to find cultures where eating cat or dog meat is acceptable

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out was sold at Tesco's and Lidl and not, say, Waitrose was significant. Supermarkets in the UK follow a market segmentation where Waitrose targets the high end, quality-conscious customer while Tesco's and Lidl aim for the mid-range and price-conscious consumers. To what extent is this fraud a predictable consequence of retailer price wars, driving down the price and with it quality?

The meat industry's reliance on private, market-based regulation raises other questions: must the risk for such fraud fall most heavily at the socioeconomic bottom end? Is hidden horsemeat limited to low end, highly processed convenience food, or does it reach into high end cuts of meat? How many of us are seeking reassurance in the conceit that we don't