



Akua works with female-owned kelp farms along the Northeast coast of the USA to grow the microalgae used in the jerky and burgers | Photo source [Akua](#)

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A KELP-BASED BURGER MAY BE THE MOST SUSTAINABLE OPTION YET

 FOOD & DRINK

Akua's kelp-based burgers may be the most sustainable meat-alternative yet, using fewer resources

Spotted: We've seen meat made from cell cultures, 3D-printed chicken and vegetarian steaks that "bleed", and now we have a burger made from kelp. Food startup Akua (previously named Beyond the Shoreline), which currently markets kelp jerky, has recently announced the release of its first kelp-based burger.

The idea for the burger was inspired by the knowledge that plant-based burgers are not necessarily better for the environment. Many of the plant ingredients are still resource-intensive, as they require lots of land, fresh water and fertiliser to grow. Akua's kelp burger, in contrast, uses a smaller amount of land-based plants and relies on kelp for the "meaty" flavour and texture.

Akua works with female-owned kelp farms along the Northeast coast of the USA to grow the microalgae used in the jerky and burgers, a species called *Saccharina Latissima*. As the kelp doesn't require arable land, fertiliser, feed or freshwater to grow, it is what Akua terms "zero-input" food. On top of this, the kelp filters carbon and nitrogen from the water, acting as natural carbon sequestration. In fact, the company's kelp jerky is carbon negative, and Akua estimates that by its fifth year in business, it will have sequestered one million pounds of carbon.

To make the kelp burger, Akua combines the kelp with mushrooms, black beans, quinoa, tomatoes and pea protein, for a tasty and nutritious non-meat patty. Co-founder and CEO Courtney Boyd Meyers [describes the mix](#) as an "umami bomb taste, and it's really satiating in the way that meat is. I think that the kelp burger is going to have a special place in the market in between a fake meat burger and your boring old veggie burger."

Seaweed is seemingly [everywhere](#) right now. In addition to farming enterprises, we have seen seaweed and kelp being used in innovations ranging from reusable [face masks](#) to [nappies](#) to [bioplastics](#). Food is just the latest discovery of how these incredible algae can be used.

Written By: Lisa Magloff

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Takeaway:

Many of the kelp farmers already earn a living through fishing, although that living has become more precarious as fish stocks dwindle. By supporting the switch to “ocean gardening,” Akua is helping to create jobs, lessen the strain on fish stocks and develop more sustainable ocean practices. This has a larger impact, as well: according to the nonprofit World Resources Institute, every €0.82 invested in ocean sustainability generates €4.10 of benefits for the planet. Kelp is also high in Vitamins A, D, E, B1, and B2, as well as Iodine, Magnesium, Zinc, Calcium, Potassium, and Iron, making it a superfood. Akua is raising funds for its kelp burger product on equity crowdfunding platform [Republic](#), where it has already achieved more than \$100,000 (€82014.50).