

PRESS RELEASE:

Plants still hot but meat's not off the menu – health-conscious consumers want it all

People love plants. With their “naturally functional” halo, consumers of all ages want to eat more of them – and in more convenient forms. From cauliflower pizza to beetroot bread, plant-based is a trend that’s growing for the long term.

But people also love meat. Despite vocal attacks on meat’s health and sustainability credentials, which made it look as if the meat category was set for long-term decline, consumption has increased in both the US and in Europe in recent years.

“Consumers’ perception of meat as a tasty and high-quality protein is driving the reinvention of meat and will secure its permanent place on the plate, and as a snack,” says Julian Mellentin, a consultant to the food and beverage industry and author of the report *10 Key Trends in Food, Nutrition and Health 2020*. This annual trend analysis identifies – for the first time – **Meat** as a growth opportunity, alongside **Plant-based**.

“People want plants, but we’re not all turning into vegans,” says Mellentin. “In a world where consumers hold fragmented beliefs, there’s room for both plants and meat.”

“With plant-based is getting all the attention, and meat under attack, creative meat producers are taking steps to reinvent their category, for example with sustainability, provenance and convenience,” he adds. For example, US sales of meat snacks grew 6.7% in 2019 to \$4.5 billion (IRI).

And Nielsen data shows that meat brands that communicate about provenance, sustainability and animal welfare are growing fast and earning premium prices. US sales of meat with health or environmental claims are growing rapidly, led by “organic” up 13.1% and “grass-fed” up 12.2%.

It's a transformation that will be welcomed by consumers, who love to hear that something they enjoy is also good for them – as happened with red wine and chocolate. And they’re particularly receptive right now to positive messages about meat, says Mellentin, thanks to the influence of other key consumer trends identified in the report, including **Protein**, **Lower-carb** and the **Rebirth of Fat**.

Consuming fewer carbs – which by definition means eating more fat and/or protein, often in the form of meat – is growing in popularity, fueled by diet patterns such as keto. And low-carb eating is now legitimized by science. The American Diabetes Association recommends

low-carb eating to fight diabetes and for weight management, and low-carbing is being adopted by doctors in the UK.

Fear of the ultimate 'bad carb' – **Sugar** – is now mainstream. A massive 80% of US consumers say they are limiting or avoiding sugar in their diets, and there are similar levels of concern in Europe and South America.

It's a reflection of the **Fragmentation** of consumer beliefs that, alongside a growing demand for low-carb products, honest indulgence is also a big growth driver: "In the midst of the focus on health and nutrition, let's not forget that most people buy bakery products for pure pleasure," adds Mellentin. "**Natural** ingredients, **Provenance** and great taste all matter more than nutrition."

Many cereals and granolas are discovering that they can gain sales by using inulin in order to offer consumers low-sugar products that also benefit **Digestive Wellness**. The Troo Granola brand in the UK, for example, uses inulin syrup in its products because it serves both as a prebiotic and a sweetener, giving a more appealing taste to consumers while keeping sugar content down.

These twin benefits have caused demand for inulin to surge – the number of products launched that feature inulin doubled between 2012 and 2019.

The 10 Key Trends identified in the report are:

1. **Digestive Wellness**
2. **Good Carbs, Bad Carbs**
3. **Plant-based**
4. **Protein**
5. **Sugar - Reinventing Sweetness**
6. **Rebirth of Fat**
7. **Meat Reimagined**
8. **Provenance and Authenticity**
9. **Energy 2.0**
10. **Mood**

And there are four "Mega Trends" that are a must-do for all companies in all categories:

1. **Naturally Functional**
2. **Fragmentation**
3. **Snackification**
4. **Sustainability**

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The report “10 Key Trends in Food, Nutrition and Health 2020” is available at www.new-nutrition.com
2. Editors can request comment or arrange an interview by contacting:
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