

Vegan consumer priorities in 2024

Looking at the drivers for consumer buying decisions in the plant-based goods market.

Logistics doesn't have to be a maze.

Looking ahead.

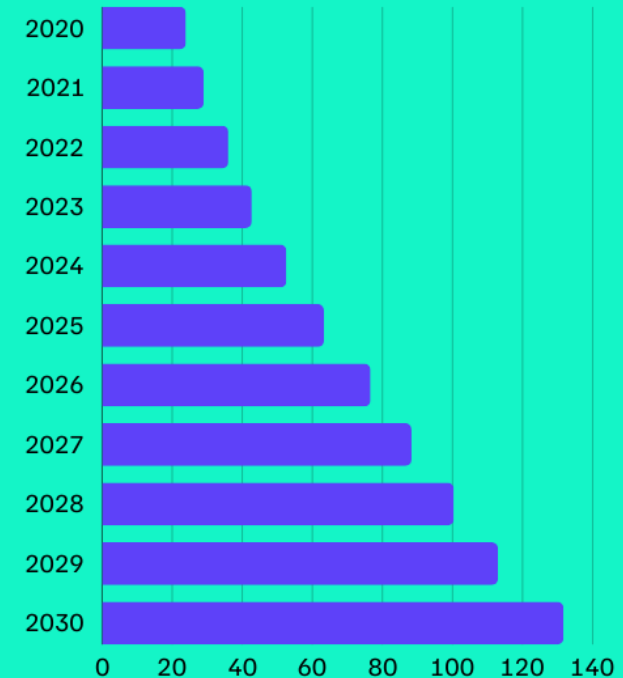
The plant-based food and drink market in 2024

The plant-based food and drink market has enjoyed transformative growth in recent years. The number of new packaged consumer goods containing a plant-based claim increased by 302% between 2018 and 2022.

But, in the wake of a cost-of-living crisis, growth has stagnated in the last 12 months. So how can plant-based food and drink manufacturers maintain a position of growth?

In any market, that is about meeting the needs of the consumer. So, what are the big drivers for consumers of plant-based goods in 2024?

Global plant-based food market 2020-2030 (£bn)



Source: Bloomberg



Health



87% of consumers understand the importance of eating a healthy diet, according to the food standards agency, and buyers of plant-based goods are no exception.

Desire to improve health remains ranked as the top driver towards plant-based produce for flexitarian consumers, and a key driver for vegans.

Most consumers understand eating more of a plant-based diet is good for health. However, market research also points to a lack of understanding of specifically what products are good for an individuals' health.

Manufacturers of plant-based food and drink who communicate the health benefits effectively, going back to basics and focusing on whole vegetables are expected to benefit more from this vital motivator for consumers in 2024.

Flexitarian: **Strongest driver**

Vegan: **Strong driver**



Flexitarian: **Strong driver**

Vegan: **Strong driver**



Environmental



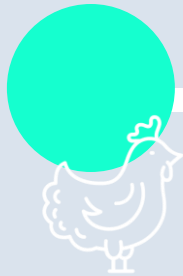
The environmental benefits of purchasing vegan produce are well documented. A study in 2023 by Oxford University concluded that if big meat eaters cut down, it's the equivalent of taking 8 million cars off UK roads. And that's just one survey among hundreds.

This overwhelming tidal wave of evidence is having an impact on the UK plant-based food and drink consumer. For vegans and flexitarians, it remains a strong driver towards plant-based goods.

The increasingly sustainably-minded consumer of plant-based goods has been shown to be willing to pay more for environmentally responsible items. In fact, a Vypr study revealed 55% of UK consumers are willing to do exactly that.

In 2024, it is expected that water-conservation will become an increasing driver for consumers. Brands focusing on responsible water stewardship could be rewarded. Owing to highly publicised issues around sewage in the UK and increased awareness around the number of litres required for meat production.

Animal welfare



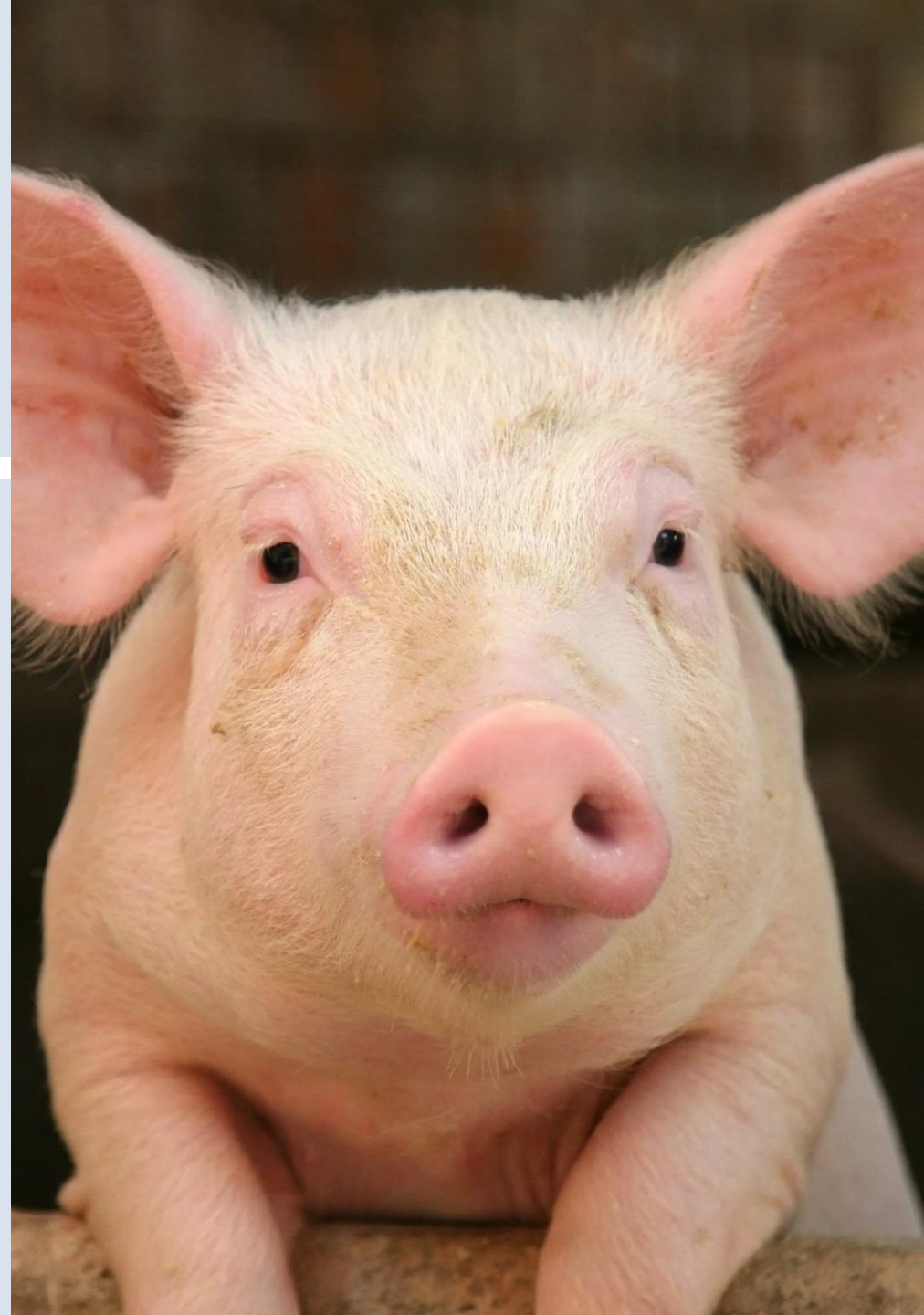
As you would expect for vegans, animal welfare is the strongest driver towards plant-based produce.

The production of traditional animal-based products often involves practices that raise concerns about animal welfare, such as crowded and confined living conditions, routine use of antibiotics, and inhumane slaughter methods.

Opting for plant-based alternatives allows individuals to enjoy a diverse and satisfying range of food and beverages while actively contributing to the reduction of harm to animals. Fostering a more compassionate approach to food consumption continues to resonate with an increasing number of conscientious consumers.

Flexitarian: **Moderate driver**

Vegan: **Strongest driver**



Location

Flexitarian: **Strong driver**

Vegan: **Strong driver**



Certain markets are expected drive the plant-based food and drink sector in 2024 and beyond. Taking steps to place products in these markets is a vital step for achieving growth in the sector.

USA

The US market continues to enjoy high levels of consumer spending. It's the younger and more affluent consumer base who are driving the plant-based food and drink trend. The leading driver for this market is the health benefits of plant-based foods.

Germany

The plant-based food and drink market in Germany is Europe's largest. Again, the younger demographics are driving growth. 44% of German consumers consider themselves vegan, vegetarian or flexitarian (Circana, 2023).

Netherlands

Netherlands are a world-leader in the manufacture and consumption of plant-based goods. Sustainability is the key driver, although other motives certainly factor into consumer buying decisions. Dutch buyers boast the highest consumption per-capita rates of plant-based foods than any European nation.

"Not only is Germany the most important market for plant-based food in Europe when it comes to sales value, but it is also the country with the highest share of plant-based eaters and an impressive share of flexitarians."

Stephanie Jacznikowska-McGirr, ProVeg International Head of Food Industry and Retail

Poland

A vibrant plant-based food and drink market in Poland is emerging among young and wealthy urban consumers. Alongside its status as one of the largest Eastern European nations, Poland presents an exciting market for manufacturers in 2024.

The market of plant-based alternatives in Poland is growing very rapidly, as already 24% of Polish consumers identify as flexitarians, and 6% follow a plant-based diet (vegan and vegetarian). This report gives detailed insight into UK consumers' attitudes towards plant-based food and highlights the most lucrative opportunities for businesses in Poland.

Marcin Tischner, Corporate Engagement & Sustainability Specialist at ProVeg Poland



Taste

It goes without saying that taste is a crucial factor in the sale of all food and drink. However, plant-based food and drink is unique in that it has other, very compelling motivators which drive purchasing.

Consequently, taste is less important for plant-based goods in comparison to all other food and drink sectors, where it is the primary driver.

That being said, taste is obviously vital for getting products into stores and repeat purchase.

Flexitarian: **Strong driver**

Vegan: **Moderate driver**

Socio-economic status

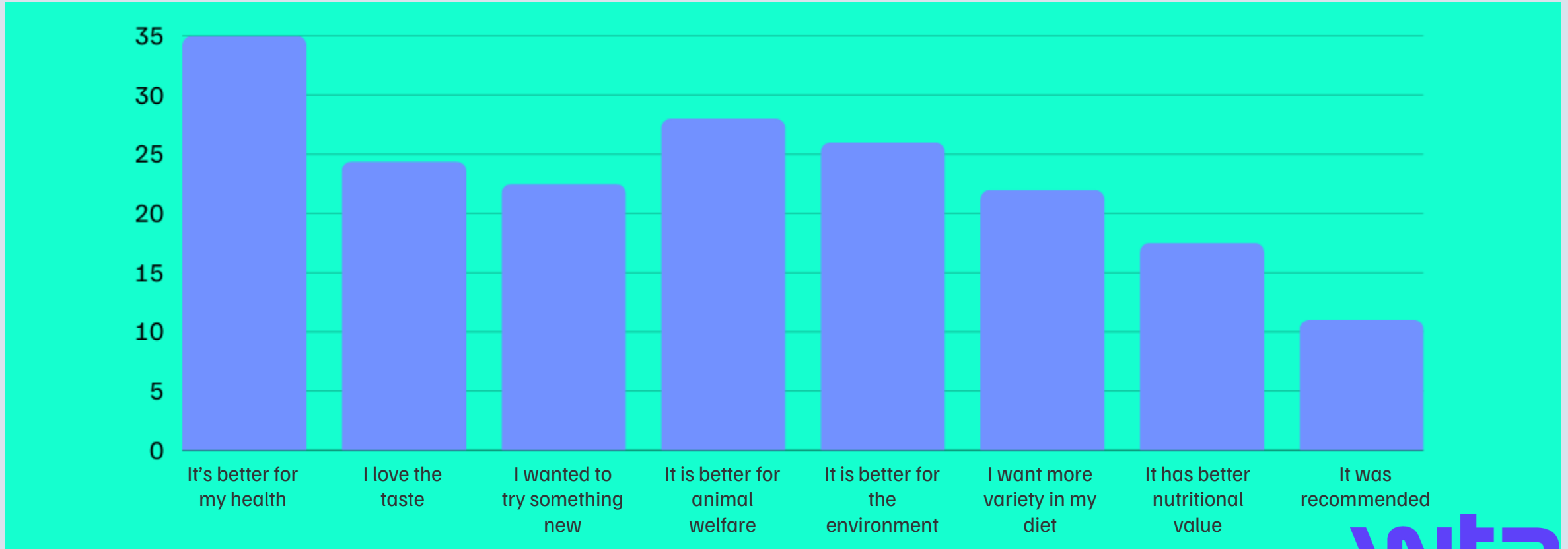
As mentioned on the location page, often it is consumers from a wealthier socio-economic background who are engaged in the purchase of plant-based food and drink.

Plant-based food and drink is often more expensive than a livestock alternatives. Therefore, market penetration into these wealthier areas can be a vital component for success in 2024.

Flexitarian: **Moderate driver**

Vegan: **Moderate driver**

Reasons for consuming plant-based alternatives in the UK (% of respondents)



Source: McKinsey & Company





Driving growth in 2024

The plant-based food and drink market in the UK is currently undergoing a deceleration, not a contraction. Having exploded into life since 2018, the market is readjusting as the cost-of-living crisis squeezes consumer spending.

However, **opportunities remain.**

The lasting shift in consumer preferences to plant-based goods will continue, as more young consumers reduce their meat intake. By ensuring products meet the key drivers discussed in this article is the best way to ensure continued growth in 2024 and beyond.

“International appetite for European plant-based food and drink has never been greater. Expanding internationally is the best way to protect a business from an individually weaker market. So there really never has been a better time for plant-based food and drink manufacturers to export.”

Jade Blackburn
Head of Sales, WTA





Meet Jade Blackburn

Head of Sales, WTA

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Jade is loved by our clients at WTA for her super friendly and honest approach. She has built her expertise in the food and drink industry over many years and consequently is able to expertly advise businesses of all sizes in the sector



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