



SHOPPER PANEL SPOTLIGHT

What's really in consumers' minds in their quest for food and beverage? To help you understand the motivations and opinions behind purchase behavior, FONA put together a panel of shoppers. The group spans the spectrum of shoppers with great insight into how they are filling their pantries and the products they consume. The group gets regular check-ins, and we share our learnings with you!



KEY FINDINGS

Almost all of our shoppers define a plant-based diet as either vegetarian or vegan, with zero animal products or by-products or majority of non-animal products. Although, plant-based is associated with healthy eating and having a positive environmental impact, most panelists are not interested in adopting the plant-based diet 100% of the time.



know what "plant-based" means



are interested in adding SOME plant-based foods to their diet



have tried "plant-based" products



consume "plant-based" foods or beverages regularly

This week, our shopper panel takes on...

PLANT-BASED

CONSUMPTION

Our panelists were asked about their awareness of plant-based foods, as well as their opinions and perception of what plant-based means. Consumers are increasingly adding vegetables, plant-based proteins and similar items to their diet. We also asked about their consumption of plant-based items, as well as their overall attitudes and taste expectations.

EXPECTATION OF TASTE

"I think it would depend upon who is making it. If it's from a restaurant I am sure it would have lots of flavors. If I was buying it premade at the grocery store my first thought might be bland." – Carrie T.

"There's been huge improvements with the taste of plant-based foods ... I would say overall there is less flavor and different textures with plant-based foods. But I have seen an increase of options. Also, plant-based yogurt is definitely improving." – Katie D.

"Not going to lie, there is a negative connotation to me when I hear plant-based. The first thing that comes to mind is it will taste like cardboard ... not a whole lot of flavor." – Deana O.

LACK OF INTEREST

Many of our panelists have mixed feelings about plant-based meat replacements. We asked for a little more detail on their lack of interest in trying or replacing meat with plant-based products.

Here is what they said.

"If I had health or diet restrictions and wasn't supposed to eat red meat I might have a different opinion."
– Howard S.

"I eat healthy amounts of meat, usually white meat (turkey or chicken) and not red meat, so I don't feel the need to replace it in my diet. I still feel like there are important nutrients that you get from meat." – Zack S.

"Consuming a little less meat is a good thing overall, both personally and environmentally. I will never give up my chicken wings and steaks, but making an effort to swap out a burger night with Impossible is a good idea. Plus – the recent alternatives are delicious."
– Theo H.



NUT PODS: MARK F.

“Nut Pods! They are an amazing creamer made from various plants – almond and coconut in this case. It’s delicious! We’ve been using this product for years. Almost completely as a creamer in coffee, though once or twice on cereal.”



MORNINGSTAR FARMS-VEGGIE BREAKFAST SAUSAGE: JUSTIN P.

“Morningstar Farms - Veggie Breakfast Sausage. It has the same look, smell, taste and consistency of pork sausage patties. When you use hot sauce or add to a breakfast sandwich/burrito, it’s a delicious substitute that has comparable sodium and zero cholesterol.”



DR. PRAEGER’S BROCCOLI LITTLES: ANN F.

“This is my favorite plant-based food! It’s so good! I like that it tastes good and I am gaining valuable nutrients as well. This is an excellent breakfast staple to have around the house! I will repeatedly buy! Dr. Praeger’s Purely Sensible Foods. Yummy! GREAT CHOICE!”

All this might leave you with a bit of a challenge. We get it, and we can help.

As more consumers look for plant-based claims, high quality and affordable options will rise to the top of the market. The thread of plant-based food that maintain the great taste that consumers are used to may become competitive alternatives, but not without some development. Maybe you’re facing taste challenges and could use some advice. FONA’s subject matter experts can help you keep that signature taste, while keeping the label claims your consumers demand. Let’s get started.

CURIOUS ABOUT SOMETHING SPECIFIC?

Our panel can help inform YOUR decisions. Let us know what you’d like us to find out from our shopper panel. **Email poscarson@fona.com and let’s dive in!**

Not a Meat Replacement

Some of our panelists are eating plant-based products in addition to meat products, not to replace them.

“I think it’s a great way to increase my diet with fruits/veggies and I honestly feel better when I have a good balance of plant-based foods and then some meat.” – Katie D.

“Yes, but not as a replacement for meat.” – Robin S.

“We’ve made tofu and Impossible a regular part of our diet, in addition to salads and steamed vegetables alongside our regular chicken and steak.” – Theo H.

THE TAKEAWAYS

1

Household Name.

The majority of our panelists are familiar with the term “plant-based,” and most have a personal experience using plant-based food and beverage products. Most of the panelists prefer traditional options when available, citing cost, sustainability, and health as the primary reasons for making the switch to plant-based offerings.

2

Room for Improvement.

While plant-based may be a more sustainable option, there is still opportunity for improving the product quality. Most of the members of our shopper panel say they associate a bad or bland taste, or poor texture for many plant-based products they have tried, making them hesitant to fully commit to a full plant-based diet..