

## Plant-based Proteins: Incl Impact of COVID-19 - US - May 2020

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"Plant-based proteins have seen a rise in popularity despite the fact that most adults continue to eat real meat. Plant-based foods enjoy a health halo, and adults who use plant-based protein sources state they do so to be healthier more than any other reason."

— **Karen Formanski, Health and Nutrition Analyst**

This report looks at the following areas:

- In the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis, consumers were stocking up on plant-based proteins along with other pantry staples.
- The new wave of high-protein, meat-like alternatives have gained mainstream popularity, especially among those who have traditionally been more inclined to primarily eat meat. However, growth may slow for higher-priced meat alternatives as budgets tighten amidst a looming recession.
- Brands should be mindful of consumer desire for variety of formats and sources of plant-based proteins.
- Some consumers, especially those who limit or eliminate meat, crave less-processed solutions for plant-based eating.

The vast majority of consumers still eat meat, yet interest in plant-based proteins continues to grow. Adults are nearly as likely to eat proteins from plant sources as they are from animal sources, and those who consume plant-based proteins do so for their health above all other reasons. Taste is also a key component, and the recent mainstream popularity of plant-based proteins is strongly associated with innovations in meat-like alternatives, which many consumers have tried while dining out. In the wake of COVID-19, plant-based proteins, especially beans and whole grains, are seeing increased sales as consumers stock up on pantry staples and foodservice options remain limited. However, an economic downturn could soften the sales growth of higher priced meat alternatives.

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Abbreviations and terms

Abbreviations

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