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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the dairy and non-dairy drinks, milk and cream market.
- Types and variants of dairy and non-dairy drinks, milk and cream used.
- Launch activity and future product development opportunities.
- Consumer behaviours and attitudes related to dairy and non-dairy drinks, milk and cream.

The COVID-19 outbreak has reinforced the importance of getting the right nutrition to support overall health, an enduring focus on health expected to be one of the lasting impacts of the pandemic. This points to heightened pertinence for nutrition-centred messages across the food and drink market, including for milk. This extends also to milk with 55% of adults agreeing milks that are naturally nutritious are preferable to fortified ones (eg with added vitamins/protein). This is a potential edge for cow's milk over plant-based milks, with some potential to win back plant-milk users.

Dairy and non-dairy drinks, milk and cream enjoyed a boost to value and volume sales during 2020 due to lockdowns and stay-at-home edicts fuelling a shift from out-of-home meal and hot drink occasions to the home, and cooking and baking enjoying an uptick. However, this boost is expected to wane in 2021 as people slowly return to the workplace/places of study and foodservice venues, the successful vaccine rollout helping people embrace the 'next normal'. Sales in the market are anticipated to fall by 2.4% by value and 1.5% by volume in 2021 to reach £4.4 billion and 5.6 billion litres.

This return to (a new) normality will see volume sales return to their long-term decline over the next five years, as milk and its key carrier products continue to face intense competition and given the forecast decline in key user age groups. The predicted enduring uptick in working at home will offer limited support for white milk and cream while curbing the high-value OTG occasions for flavoured milk.



"The COVID-19 outbreak has reinforced the importance of getting the right nutrition to support overall health, an enduring focus on health expected to be one of the lasting impacts of the pandemic. This points to heightened pertinence for nutrition-centred messages across the food and drink market, including for milk."

– Amy Price, Senior Food and Drink Analyst

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The plant-based trend continues to fuel growth in the market, tapping into consumer trends around the environment and conscious consumerism, while also being seen to be healthier: 23% of adults believe that plant-based milk is better for them than cow's milk. Leading players have also been investing in NPD and advertising support, helping to drive growth. However, cost concerns do exist, with 50% of adults agreeing that high prices make buying plant-based milk unappealing. Meanwhile, doubts over taste are also evident, with 72% of users/buyers thinking cow's milk tastes better than plant-based milks.

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