Milk and Non-dairy Milk - US - 2022

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The above prices are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

This report looks at the following areas:

- **Milk types purchased in 2022 and in comparison to 2021**
- **Reasons households use and do not use non-dairy milk**
- **Perceptions of dairy and non-dairy milk base types**
- **Attributes consumers would like to see in dairy and non-dairy milk**
- **Anticipated change in household milk consumption**

The total milk consumer base increased 4% from June 2021 to April 2022, driven solely by dairy milk. Following a steep fall off from 2020-21, consumers are seemingly reverting to dairy milk. Non-dairy, which reached peak popularity in 2021, has turned down. The majority of non-dairy buyers agree they would switch to dairy milk if non-dairy offerings became too expensive, indicating switching behavior may be temporary. However, increasing positive perceptions surrounding dairy milk indicate some consumers are coming to reappreciate the value of the category.

The onset of record high inflation has led consumers back to their own kitchens and further stalled the recovery of foodservice channels, both of which benefit retail milk sales. However, the benefits are category dependent. Data shows the portion of consumers who buy just one type of milk increased 8% from June 2021-April 2022. This is an indication that, amid inflation, consumers are streamlining streaming their milk purchases in favor of more reliable and versatile dairy milk offerings.

All measured non-dairy milk types fall short of dairy milk in important consumer perceptions related to good taste experience, nutrition and performance in popular usage occasions. As the non-dairy category matures, these perceptions are only weakening in comparison to dairy. Putting some distance between dairy milk in terms of actual name, store placement, usage and more can lead consumers to see non-dairy milk products as entirely new beverages, helping to put an end to the comparison game.

“Inflation is putting the holistic value of dairy milk on a pedestal, while calling greater attention to non-dairy’s shortcomings in taste, nutrition and versatile usage. As economic conditions improve and discretionary income returns, the playing field will once again level off.”

– **Sydney Olson, Food and Drink Analyst**

Nearly eight in 10 milk buyers agree they want to improve their diet over the coming year, and 72% of total milk purchasers agree they generally view dairy as having a positive impact on health. This belief holds true across generations and marks a significant increase over those who agreed with the statement last year. While this is especially opportune timing for dairy milk brands, according to Mintel's Global Consumer, March 2022, nearly half of US adults think a healthy diet should contain both animal and plant proteins, proving there is room for non-dairy milk brands to also contribute to consumers' post-pandemic healthy intentions.

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