This report looks at the following areas:

- Usage of meat substitutes
- Benefits associated with eating less meat, including cost savings and environmental impact
- The impact of the rising cost of living on consumer habits in the market and sales
- Opportunities for meat substitutes products during the income squeeze
- Consumer behaviours and attitudes related to meat substitutes
- Factors that would encourage buying of meat substitutes, such as nutrition, flavour and ingredients

Over half of meat substitute eaters eat these products at least once a week, equating to 26% of the overall population. This demonstrates the extent to which these products have gained a significant role in UK diets.

The relatively high price of these products, and the fact that meat-based competitors are matching or even undercutting these, will be a barrier to growth whilst incomes are squeezed; 52% of red meat/poultry eaters say they would buy meat substitutes that are cheaper than meat. That cooking a meat-free meal from scratch using vegetables/pulses will often be a cheaper choice also adds to the pressure for meat substitutes to prove their value.

Some 74% of people say that there are better ways to reduce their environmental footprint than limiting their meat intake. Despite widespread coverage of the contribution of the meat industry to climate change, that people view other environmentally-friendly practices as more effective in combatting this poses a challenge to both the meat reduction trend and meat substitutes market going forward.

Some 42% of people agree that information on their environmental impact would make meat substitutes more appealing. Whilst this highlights how these products cannot solely rely on the fact they are not meat to secure buy-in, it

“The impressive growth enjoyed by meat substitutes has faltered in 2022, as the COVID-boost has been lost and the income squeeze has made the high price of these more of a barrier. Driving awareness of their nutritional credentials and emphasising versatility can help these products navigate the income squeeze.”
– Alice Pilkington, Food and Drink Research Analyst, November 2022

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