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Consumer focus: Four plant-based food trends to be aware of

In 2022, plant-based eating is here to stay. According to [Bloomberg Group](#), global retail sales of plant-based foods are on track to reach \$160 billion by 2030, up from \$29 billion in 2020. Meanwhile, research by [The NPD Group](#) has found that 19% of consumers are looking to add more plant-based foods to their diet.

However, the plant-based market is more fragmented and complex than it often appears – and it's evolving month by month. We look at some of the current trends shaping the market and what they mean for growers.

1. Flexitarianism flexes its muscles

The biggest sources of demand for plant-based products aren't vegetarians or vegans, but rather people choosing to eat less meat. According to one study, 89% of plant-based users don't consider themselves vegan or vegetarian.

This is good news for crop farmers: "flexitarians" who still consume animal proteins may be less hungry for so-called "meat alternatives", and more likely to stick to traditional plant-based foods such as vegetables, grains and pulses.

2. When two trends converge

Clean/organic eating and plant-based consumption were once considered separate movements, but we're now seeing signs of convergence. In other words, health-conscious consumers seem to be moving away from more complex, processed plant-based products toward simpler, healthier alternatives. Rather than fake-meat burgers, think more cauliflower steak.

There's data to support this, with global avoidance of plant-based protein estimated to have doubled between 2019 and 2021, according to Hartman's 'Health + Wellness' report.

3. Sustainability matters

And it's not just about health. Growing environmental awareness at consumer level is also driving the trend toward more wholesome local produce. Going forward, Western markets may see increased demand for "low-carbon" vegetable categories (like brassicas, onions and leeks) in place of mostly imported crops such as avocados and soybeans.

4. Innovation, innovation, innovation

Though simple is often best, there's no shortage of innovation in the plant-based sector. A particularly interesting trend is that of "hybrid foods" – burgers and nuggets, for instance, that include a blend of meat and vegetable products. This may also favor growers, as hybrid foods open up new paths to increased vegetable consumption.

As you can see, things change quickly in the plant-based world. At Hazera, we keep our finger on the pulse and provide solutions to help our customers navigate today's fast-evolving consumer landscape. [Contact us today](#) to see how we can support your business.