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How Alternative Proteins are Helping Consumers Reduce Their Carbon Footprint

Samantha Petersen

Utah State University, sami.mathews@gmail.com

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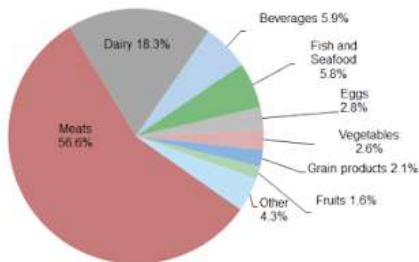
How Alternative Proteins are Helping Consumers Reduce their Carbon Footprint

Samantha Petersen, *Utah State University*

Introduction

The alternative protein market is trending toward creating more animal product alternatives, not just meatless meat. Alternative protein is a growing market that creates meat alternatives for groups like vegans and vegetarians.

Large meat companies are starting to invest in meatless meat research and technology. Reducing meat consumption is one of the best ways to reduce land and water usage as well as reducing carbon emissions.



Greenhouse gas emissions by food type (Umich, 2020)

Background

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, about “14.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions” is due to animal agriculture.

Companies like Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods are changing the meatless meat industry with their meatless burger patties. Now, large meat corporations like Tyson are investing in their own alternative proteins. The demand is so high that plant-based burger orders at restaurants have increased by 10% from 2018-2019 (State of Green Business). The alternative meat market is expected to “hit \$140 billion” in the next ten years (State of Green Business, 2020).

Today, meatless burger patties are just the beginning. Companies are starting to create meatless deli slices, seafood, and are even 3D printing meat cells. Since food comprises “10-30% of a household’s carbon footprint,” switching from meat products to meatless proteins can have a huge impact on carbon emissions. Even switching to one meatless meal a week saves “the equivalent of driving 1,160 miles” (UMich, 2020).

Conclusion

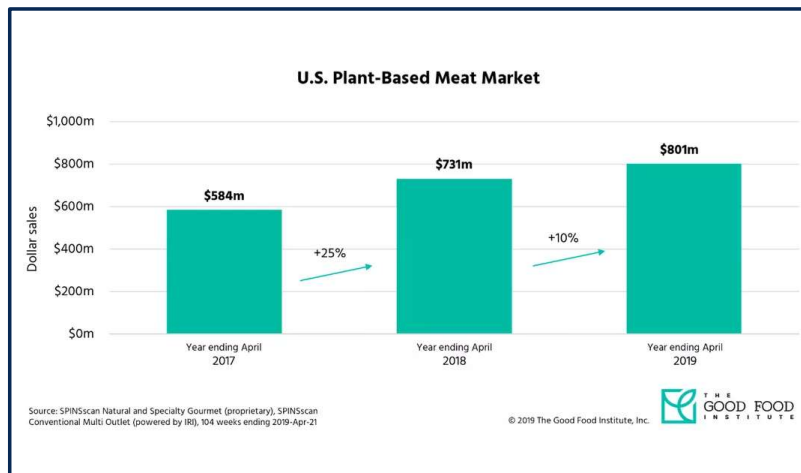
With a growing alternative meat market, it is easier for consumers to reduce their meat consumption. There are many different types of meatless meat products, and the future only holds more.



Since food is such a big part of a consumer’s carbon footprint, and meat has more emissions than any other food type, making the switch to alternative proteins can have a huge impact. Consumers don’t have to become vegan to make an impact. Just one plant-based meal a week can decrease carbon emissions significantly over time.

References

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Samantha Petersen
Utah State University
Marketing
sami.petersen@usu.edu