

**Almost two Canadians in five intend to continue to buy plant-based alternatives, but price remains the number one hurdle.**

**HALIFAX, NS. (April 27, 2023)** – Plant-based products have been around for a very long time in Canada, but sales and promotions have intensified over the last five years. For instance, Beyond Meat invaded the market with its very aggressive marketing strategy, and many other companies followed suit. In recent months, we have seen sales for many plant-based product manufacturer drop significantly, prompting many to wonder what the future holds for plant-based products, or vegetable-protein based products.

Working with **Caddle**, we conducted a cross-national survey at the end of April 2023, which included 5,507 respondents. With this investigation, we looked at how Canadians are consuming plant-based products, how they perceive them, and what benefits they see in these products after a few years of very aggressive marketing campaigning.

**Meat alternatives**

We first asked if respondents had consumed any plant-based meat alternative in the last 12 months. Nationally, 34 percent said that they did. The questionnaire also looked at the frequency of consumption over the last 12 months. A total of 31.0 percent has consumed a plant-based meat alternative at least **once a week**. A total of 19.8 percent stated a **few times a month**.

Provinces	Have you consumed a plant-based MEAT alternative product in the last 12 months?
Nova Scotia	36%
Newfoundland and Labrador	23%
Prince Edward Island	26%
British Columbia	36%
Alberta	29%
Ontario	34%
New Brunswick	36%
Manitoba	22%
Saskatchewan	28%
Quebec	34%

### Dairy alternatives

We did the same for dairy alternatives. Results were a little different. A total of 42.2 percent of Canadians have consumed a dairy alternative product in the last 12 months. More than half of respondents (**50.4 percent**) who have consumed did so at least once a week. These numbers are generally higher than with plant-based meat alternatives.

Provinces	Have you consumed a plant-based DAIRY alternative product in the last 12 months?
Nova Scotia	36%
Newfoundland and Labrador	27%
Prince Edward Island	20%
British Columbia	49%
Alberta	43%
Ontario	45%
New Brunswick	37%
Manitoba	39%
Saskatchewan	40%
Quebec	33%

### Benefits

When asked what the preferred source of protein is, **49.2 percent of respondent chose animal proteins**. While 28.1 percent chose both animal and plant-based, 12.3 percent chose plant-based proteins as their favourite source.

We asked what motivated Canadians to buy plant-based alternative products. A total of 30.7 percent chose a plant-based product due to **health benefits**. The **personal taste** difference was selected by 12.6 percent, followed by **environmental benefits** at 12.1 percent. A total of 8.9 percent of respondents chose a plant-based product for **animal welfare** concerns.

As for taste, 33.8 percent of respondents consider plant-based products to **taste good**. Meanwhile, 39.8 percent of respondents believe plant-based alternatives to offer high **nutritional value**.

**Price** is a challenge though. Only 22.3 percent see **plant-based alternatives to be affordable**. A total of 49.0 percent of respondents consider plant-based products to be available in **retail stores** when they want to purchase one. At **restaurants**, it is a little lower, at 30.7 percent.

“Our data suggests the plant-based market is real in Canada, numbers are much higher than expected”, said **Dr. Sylvain Charlebois**, Director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University. Charlebois further states: “But the market and plant-based products clearly remain a work in progress, but price is unsurprisingly the biggest hurdle for the category.”

### **Future of plant-based products**

Our investigation also looked at the willingness to buy plant-based products over the next 6 months. A total of **39.4 percent of respondents are either likely or very likely to buy a plant-based product within the next 6 months**. We also asked what factors respondents would consider when buying a plant-based product. While a total of 47.7 percent see the price as a factor, 44.9 percent see taste as a factor, 31.5 percent consider nutritional value as important. Both availability and brand are much less important factors for respondents.

While only **29.0 percent of respondents would buy plant-based alternatives if they knew they were made more sustainably**, **48.2 percent of respondents believe the quality of plant-based alternatives in general is improving**. Interestingly, a total of 33.5 percent of respondents **believe they are more knowledgeable** about proteins compared to 12 months ago.

“The fact that almost half of Canadians believe plant-based products are improving is interesting”, said **Janet Music**, Research Associate at the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University. “Canadians are clearly engaged and will continue to seek alternatives.”

**End of report.**

Download the preliminary results of the survey in English and French at <https://www.dal.ca/sites/agri-food.html>.

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**Methodology for survey:** Caddle is one of the most credible active panels in the Canadian market. A representative survey of Canadians was conducted in April 2023. A total of 5,507 Canadians participated in this survey. Margin of Error: +/- 2.1%, 19 times out of 20. Any discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

**Disclosure:** Funding for the survey was provided by Caddle and Dalhousie University.