# schouten specialist in plant-based protein

### Consumer Insights >> meat substitutes

Q1 2025 - The role of taste

#### In this update:

- The impact of taste on Dutch consumers' decision-making process when choosing meat substitutes.
- The definition and perception of 'taste.'
- The impact of a negative experience on consumers' intention to repurchase.
- The critical role and complexity of taste in the development of meat substitutes.





#### What do Dutch people consider when buying a meat substitute?





The Netherlands is known for its progressiveness in the field of meat substitutes. Per capita, the Dutch consume the most meat substitutes in Europe.

Many retailers have set ambitious goals to sell more plant-based products.

However, the retail market for meat substitutes has not grown further recently.



#### The definition and perception of 'taste'

- Taste refers to the sensory experience perceived by the tongue when certain substances interact with taste receptors in the mouth.
- There are five widely recognized basic tastes: sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and umami (savory). Some researchers also propose a sixth taste: fatty.
- Taste is not only about the basic taste sensations but also involves texture, aroma, temperature, and mouthfeel, creating a holistic flavor experience.
- Taste is subjective and shaped by cultural influences, individual preferences, and exposure to certain foods.
- Taste helps humans identify foods that are safe and nutritious (e.g., sweetness indicates energy-rich foods) and avoid potentially harmful substances (e.g., bitterness may signal toxins).
- Taste preferences can change over time, influenced by repeated exposure, age, and dietary habits.





## Taste is the most decisive reason for respondents to choose a meat substitute or to not repurchase Source: Markteffect Research to Everything

• Question: Suppose you bought and ate a meat substitute, and you didn't like it. To what extent would you be willing to buy another meat substitute in the future?



### Disappointing taste has contributed to stagnation in category growth

"Copying the taste of meat is extremely complicated and it's obviously difficult to convince adults to buy something again if they didn't like it the first time."

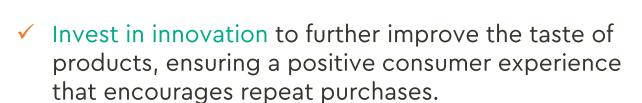
Source











- ✓ Replicate familiar flavors: Mimic meat's umami flavor to make plant-based options more recognizable.
- ✓ Improve texture: Create meat alternatives with the same 'bite' and juiciness as real meat.
- ✓ When choosing to create non-meat analogues, choose recognizable and mild flavours and minimize bitterness.
- Balance sustainability, health, and taste by using ingredients that are both sustainable and healthconscious, without compromising on flavor.







Our next Consumer insights >> Meat Substitutes will be about the role of price.

Don't miss out!



Questions? Please feel free to contact me

Mark van Noorloos

Marketing Manager

T: +31 (0) 183 44 63 73 mvnoorloos@schoutenfood.com www.schoutenfood.com



#### Disclaimer

The information in this publication has been compiled with the utmost care by Schouten Europe B.V. based on available data and reliable sources. While we strive to provide accurate and up-to-date information, we cannot guarantee that all information is completely correct or up to date. The insights and forecasts presented are based on the interpretation of the information available at the time of publication and may be subject to change.

Schouten Europe B.V. accepts no responsibility for any damage or loss resulting directly or indirectly from the use of the information contained in this trend analysis. The content is for informational purposes only and does not constitute advice or a recommendation for specific decisions or actions.

Use of this publication is at your own risk. Schouten Europe B.V. reserves the right to make changes to the contents of this publication at any time without prior notice.

