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# Market Outlook Q2 2026

Mycoprotein as the next  
growth driver in meat alternatives

# Introduction

- The meat alternatives market is evolving. The first wave of plant-based products delivered significant growth, but consumers have become more critical.
- Taste, texture, nutritional value and price are playing an increasingly important role.
- Flexitarians continue to seek tasty and accessible alternatives, but expect stronger reasons to buy than before.





# Mycoprotein

- We are seeing growing interest in fungi (the group of organisms that includes mushrooms) and mycoprotein.
- Mycoprotein is produced through the fermentation of fungi and naturally has a fibrous structure.
- This makes it highly suitable for meat alternatives with a firm bite and a familiar eating experience.
- In addition, it is high in protein, contains fibre, is low in saturated fat and provides all essential amino acids.

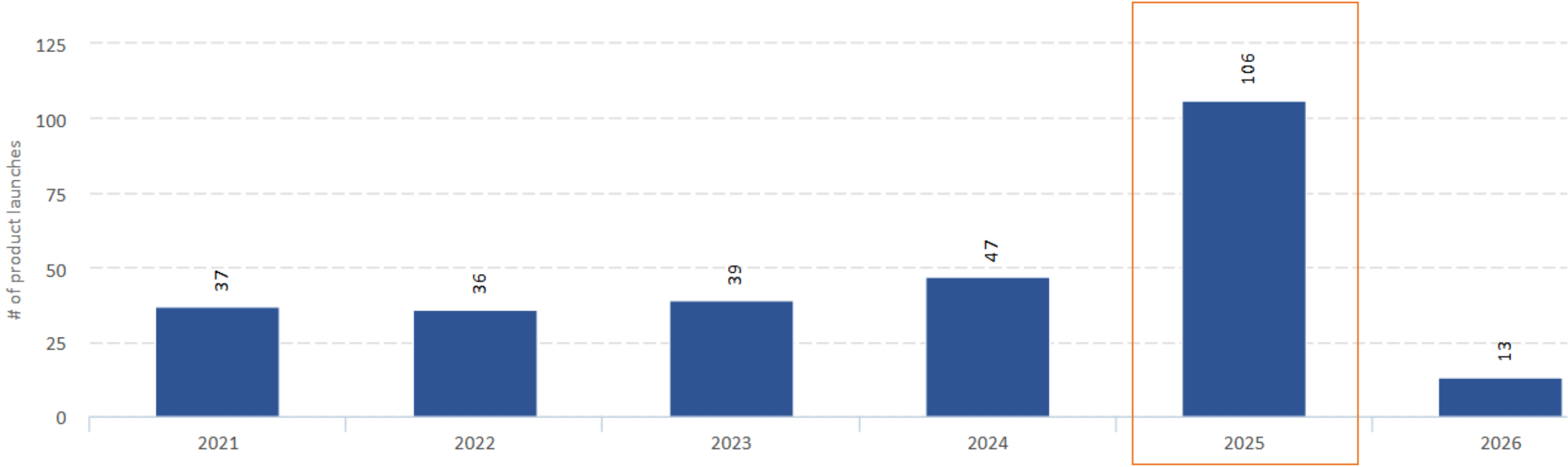


## Closer to meat

- Thanks to its natural fibrous structure, mycoprotein offers opportunities to develop products that come closer to meat in terms of bite, texture and overall eating experience.



# Record number of mycoprotein meat alternative launches in 2025



# Mycoprotein aligns with multiple market trends



# 1. Better taste and texture

- Consumers increasingly expect alternatives that combine sustainability with great taste and a familiar eating experience.
- Its natural fibrous structure enables mycoprotein to deliver a firmer bite and a texture that more closely resembles meat.



## 2. Growth of flexitarian consumers

- Demand is increasingly driven by consumers who are not looking to eliminate meat completely, but to eat it less often.
- For this group, accessible products with familiar flavours and formats are essential.



### 3. Sustainable protein transition

- Pressure on agricultural land, water resources and the climate is increasing.
- Fermentation provides a scalable pathway to high-quality protein production while reducing dependence on conventional livestock farming.



## 4. Clean label and familiarity

- Fungi and fermentation align well with growing demand for natural, less complex ingredients.
- This makes mycoprotein an attractive option for brands seeking cleaner labels and clearer product stories.



## 5. Focus on fibre and nutritional balance

- The focus is shifting from protein alone to overall nutritional value.
- In addition to high-quality protein, mycoprotein naturally contains fibre, aligning with trends such as gut health, satiety, balanced nutrition and positive nutrition.
- This creates opportunities for products that combine taste, texture and nutritional value.



# Consumer Acceptance Challenges



# Three Key Challenges

## 1. Limited consumer awareness

Many consumers are still unfamiliar with the term *mycoprotein*, resulting in limited understanding of what it is and why it is relevant.

## 2. Negative associations with fungi and fermentation

Terms such as *fungi* and *fermentation* can trigger negative associations. Consumers are more likely to think of spoilage than food innovation, making language and framing critical.

## 3. Educating without adding complexity

The challenge is to communicate the benefits without becoming overly technical. Ultimately, consumers buy based on taste, familiarity and eating experience, not microbiology.



# How to Address These Challenges

## ➤ Focus on benefits rather than technology

Successful communication should focus less on what it is and more on:

- ✓ Taste and texture
- ✓ Fibre and protein
- ✓ Juiciness and bite
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Natural fermentation
- ✓ Nutritional value



# Normalise Fungi

- **Similar to the earlier acceptance of fermentation**
- Products such as yoghurt, cheese and tempeh have helped make fermentation a widely accepted food technology.
- For mycoprotein, the opportunity lies in positioning fungi as a modern and natural source of protein.



# Clean Label and natural positioning

Consumers respond more positively when fungi are associated with:

- ✓ Natural fermentation
- ✓ Culinary inspiration
- ✓ Umami
- ✓ Mushrooms
- ✓ Nutritious proteins
- ✓ Fibre



[Schouten Crunchy Mushroom Burger](#)

Rather than when the focus is on "moulds" or food technology.



# Mainstream Acceptance Requires Familiar Applications

- Consumer acceptance accelerates when mycoprotein is incorporated into familiar formats such as burgers, nuggets, mince, snacks and hybrid products.
- Familiar applications reduce the barrier to trial and adoption.



# What Opportunities Does Mycoprotein Offer?



# 1. Criticism of Ultra-Processed Foods Creates New Opportunities

## Why is it relevant?

Growing criticism of ultra-processed foods and long ingredient lists is encouraging manufacturers to develop simpler and more recognisable recipes.

## Products with mycoprotein offer opportunities for:

- ✓ Reduced reliance on texturisers and binders
- ✓ A more natural meat-like structure
- ✓ Simpler recipes
- ✓ Premiumisation of meat alternatives
- ✓ An improved eating experience



## 2. Fermentation as a New Protein Category

Rather than positioning products with mycoprotein as "just another meat alternative", position them as:

- Next-generation ingredients
- Fermentation-based proteins
- Next-generation protein

### Opportunities for the market:

- Differentiation from existing plant-based concepts
- Meeting the growing demand for innovation among retailers and brands
- Creating a new consumer narrative



# 3. New Opportunities for Differentiation in Convenience

## Why is it relevant?

Mycoprotein's texture and functionality make it particularly well suited to applications where eating experience is a key success factor.

## Market opportunities:

- Pizza toppings
- Ready meals
- Wraps and sandwiches
- Meal salads
- Snack fillings
- Nuggets and finger foods
- Food-to-go concepts
- QSR applications





# Key Takeaways

- Consumers increasingly expect meat alternatives to deliver on taste, texture and nutritional value.
- Fermentation is emerging as an important food technology.
- Mycoprotein aligns with trends such as clean label, fibre enrichment and protein diversification.
- The greatest opportunities lie in convenience, foodservice and QSR applications where texture and eating experience are critical to success.





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