

Plant-based food sales are up in the UK, but meat sales not affected

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The UK's craving for meat is not affected by campaigns for plant-based alternatives, according to new research by the University of Surrey.

The study looked at UK supermarket sales during the "Veganuary" period and found that while the average weekly sales of plant-based foods increased significantly by 57%, there was no reciprocal reduction in [meat](#) sales.

The research monitored sales of plant-based and [meat products](#) in January 2021, with figures compared to sales before and after the Veganuary campaign period in November 2020, February, and March 2021.

Joanna Trewern, lead author of the study from the University of Surrey, says that their "study suggests that while retail-led campaigns are driving increased sales of plant-based, we are not yet seeing meat replacement at scale, which is key to drive progress toward healthy, sustainable diets."

"Retailers have an important role to play in enabling the adoption of healthier, more sustainable consumer diets. It's great to see them taking action, but more is needed to reduce our reliance on meat and dairy."

The increase in plant-based product sales was most significant at superstores, and in low-income areas, suggesting that the retailer's efforts to make plant-based products more affordable paid off.

Current figures show UK individuals' [meat consumption](#) far exceeds UK Government recommendations, and the National Food Strategy recommended a minimum 30% reduction in meat consumption to support our nation to reach Net Zero by 2050 in line with Government climate commitments.

Joanna Trewern commented that "for there to be any chance of meeting UK climate change targets, Government, food companies, [civil society](#), scientists, and [health professionals](#) need to work together urgently to implement action plans and policies that can deliver swift and sustained

change."

The research was published in *Public Health Nutrition*.

More information: Joanna Trewern et al, Does promoting plant-based products in Veganuary lead to increased sales, and a reduction in meat sales? A natural experiment in a supermarket setting, *Public Health Nutrition* (2022). [DOI: 10.1017/S1368980022001914](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980022001914)

Provided by University of Surrey

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