

# The Grocer

Focus On: Plant-based

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## Feature one: Plant-based milks

By Jimmy Nicholls [jimmy.nicholls@thegrocer.co.uk](mailto:jimmy.nicholls@thegrocer.co.uk)

Plant-based milk has gone a little sour. Having cruised on continuous growth for several years, sales volumes are finally falling back. With alternative dairy now reaching two-thirds of the population, it's partly saturation, partly lockdowns ending. But there are also signs that the stalwarts of alternative milk are losing sales to challenger brands, to say nothing of cheaper own label rivals in a time of inflation. What kind of premium credentials can retain value when shoppers are looking to spend less? And how are retailers making the most of own label products?

**Price:** The price of alternative milk has steadily crept up in the past few months. What kind of conversations are happening between brands and retailers? And how are consumers responding?

**Premium:** As plant-based milk becomes costlier, brands will need stronger signals that their products are worth the expense. What are they planning?

**Own label:** Own label alternative milk is in growth while brands decline, according to Kantar. How can retailers make the most of this trend?

**Innovations:** We will profile 4 new products or ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before. We need launch date, rsp, and a hi-res picture of each

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## Feature two: Plant-based cheese

By Rob Brown [rob\\_j\\_a\\_brown@hotmail.com](mailto:rob_j_a_brown@hotmail.com)

Established manufacturers have long eyed plant-based cheese with a mix of interest and trepidation. While for pioneers the potential rewards outweigh the reputational risks of a rubbery fake cheddar, big brands have more to lose. It's therefore notable that some big dairy manufacturers have finally taken the leap, launching new lines into plant-based cheese. So can these established names bring more shoppers into the nascent category? What are innovators still doing to improve taste and texture? And can plant-based cheese be made accessible to price sensitive consumers amid rising living costs?

**R&D:** Manufacturers are continuing to perfect the process of creating textures and tastes in plant-based cheese that can match what people expect from dairy versions. What kind of advances are being seen?

**Big players:** In other plant-based categories the arrival of big food and drink brands has gone a long way to broadening their appeal. Will we see the same in cheese?

**Small players:** And while this happens, what role is left for smaller brands such as challengers? And how will the initial pioneers in the category react?

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### **Feature three: Plant-based ready meals**

By Matt Chittock [matt.chittocknew@googlemail.com](mailto:matt.chittocknew@googlemail.com)

Is there anything plant-based brands can't do? From early experiments with mushrooms and mycoproteins, you can now find plant-based versions of everything from eggs to fish. It's therefore little surprise that plant-based credentials have exploded in ready meals, with both plant-based pioneers and established food behemoths taking advantage. But will these convenient options appeal to shoppers at a time of squeezed living standards? How much of it is effective innovation rather than opportunism? And how is it affecting the wider ready meals category?

**Specialists:** Exclusively plant-based brands are offering a range of meatless twists on classic dishes. What kind of innovation are they working on, and can they continue to impress?

**Outsiders:** Some big food and drink manufacturers have also been launching into plant-based ready meals. What is their scope for growing the category and bringing in previously sceptical shoppers?

**Price:** Convenience can often take a backseat to cost during a time of recession. So how will plant-based ready meals offer value and convince shoppers to part with increasingly scarce cash?

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