

# The Grocer

## Focus On: Protein & Functional Food

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Previous reports of Britain hitting ‘peak protein’ appear to have been premature. Protein-enriched innovation is building strength, with barely a week passing over the past year without news of a new protein-rich product launch hitting. We’ve had a tranche of [protein puddings](#), [protein snack bars](#) and even the launch of [pea protein pop](#). How are they performing? What’s driving this wave of innovation? And to what extent are brands capitalising on the new HFSS rules?

**HFSS:** This feature will explore opportunities that have opened up for low-sugar/high-protein snacks and drinks as result of last October’s imposition of the new HFSS regulations. Are higher protein products filling space vacated by products such as confectionery, crisps and sugary soft drinks?

**Protein sources:** This feature will explore the raw materials producers are using and how this is changing. What are the benefits of certain protein sources over others? With the cost of everything from raw materials to labour and logistics souring in the past year, to what extent are manufacturers able to switch to different sources of protein?

**Merchandising and promotions:** This feature will also explore how brands and retailers are promoting and presenting higher protein and other functional products in store. For example, are protein bars and drinks commanding more impulse space?

**Other functional claims:** Protein has long been prized for its ability to keep hunger at bay and help build muscle tissue. But what other macro-ingredients and functional claims – for example, fibre, probiotics, prebiotics, nootropics, gut health, adaptogens, etc – are coming to the fore?

**What do shoppers want from functional food?:** Exploration of the sort of functional claims that carry most weight with consumers, how much they’re prepared to pay for products carrying such claims, etc.

**Alternative proteins:** Meat and dairy have long been humanity’s go-to protein – thanks in part to subsidies that artificially lower prices and the low margins retailers take on meat and dairy. But as demand for plant-based protein and climate pressure mounts, manufacturers and retailers are widening their use of plant-based proteins, with [fava beans](#), [fungi](#) and peas attracting recent headlines. So, what are their benefits? And what will be the next big thing?

**Innovations:** We profile eight new or soon-to-be-launched functional food and drink products including recommended retail price, pack weight/volume, launch date and a high res (minimum 300dpi) product shot.