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Taste, health and ecology

How dairy consumers satisfy differing desires and demands

30.07.2021 - New research from Innova Market Insights shows that consumers want their dairy purchases to satisfy multiple concerns and cravings. Attitudes and opinions can vary widely from one category to the other. For example, milk and yogurt purchasing is driven largely by everyday nutrition needs, but taste is king in cheese choices.



Photo by The Humble Co. on Unsplash

For milk shoppers, traceability and sustainable farming methods are also increasingly important, while almost half of yogurt consumers prefer products to have some type of extra health benefit. Yet with cheese, messages related to nature and tradition are more likely to turn heads.

The popularity of dairy varies widely in different parts of the world. For example, there is a marked divide

between Europe – a region of dairy lovers – and Asia, where there is much less of a tradition of consumption.

“This is reflected in purchasing,” says Lu Ann Williams, Global Insights Director at Innova Market Insights. “For example, nine out of ten Russians see cheese as a typical grocery purchase, in contrast to just one in ten in China.”

Having said that, research also shows that Asians are far more likely than Western consumers to be increasing their dairy intakes (e.g. 42% in China and Vietnam vs. 13-14% in France and Germany). Therefore, while uptake remains lower in Asia, there is hope for wider interest and more mainstream dairy purchasing in the future.

Differing habits are also reflected in the data showing which dairy products go with which eating occasions. Breakfast is particularly important for milk and yogurt consumption, but cheese use is more evenly spread across main meals.

Once more, there are notable regional trends. Latin Americans over-index on the use of dairy products at the breakfast table, while Scandinavians have a penchant for yogurt at breakfast time. In France and Turkey, yogurt is more likely to find a place at the lunch or dinner table.



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Looking ahead, the global pandemic has intensified consumer interest in naturalness and traceability, and these will be important for dairy innovators going forward. In addition, growing competition from plant based alternatives increases pressure on the dairy industry to understand consumers' needs and target them accordingly.