

“UK consumers cutting down on red meat,” says Leatherhead Food Research

A recent survey of 999 adults in the UK found that in the past 12 months, 74% of households have consciously reduced the amount of red meat they consume.

Findings published by Science Group company [Leatherhead Food Research](#) reveal that 40% are eating 'a bit less red meat' and 32% are 'trying to swap red meat for fish or chicken'. While only 14% of households include vegetarians, more than a third (35%) have introduced one or more dedicated 'vegetarian days' per week over the past year.

The perception that it's healthier to eat less red meat was the biggest driver of change across all age groups, with more than half of respondents (55%) citing this. However, concern about the environmental impact of red meat production was also significant, especially in the 16-35 age group where 51% highlighted this factor.

When asked what had influenced their dietary changes, 37% of respondents mentioned that TV programmes or documentaries had played a part. With the youngest segment (16-35), talking to friends and family or seeing information on social media also played an important role for 38% and 32% respectively.

Cindy Beeren, Operations Director, at Leatherhead, says the findings underline the rising interest in 'flexitarian' diets, where people enjoy meat occasionally but try to avoid eating it too often. She believes this is a lasting trend that will shape the long-term future of the food industry.

“People are becoming more purposeful about food choices in the home, so manufacturers and retailers are changing their offering to meet evolving demands,” Cindy explains. “The message from Public Health England about reducing consumption of red and processed meat seems to be taking hold. But it's interesting to see that, for younger adults, environmental concerns are just as important.

“As this trend gathers momentum, it raises lots of questions about the options for new meat-free products. We expect to see a surge of innovation in this area, focusing on

everything from sensory aspects, such as taste and texture, to the nutritional profiling of food.”

Leatherhead’s consumer survey was completed by 999 people in the UK during August 2019.

Further information about Leatherhead is available at www.leatherheadfood.com.

Ends

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About Leatherhead Food Research

Leatherhead Food Research provides expertise and support to the global food and drink sector with practical solutions that cover all stages of a product’s life cycle from consumer insight, ingredient innovation and sensory testing to food safety consultancy and global regulatory advice. Leatherhead operates a membership programme which represents a who’s who of the global food and drinks industry. Supporting all members and clients, large or small, Leatherhead provides consultancy and advice as well as training, market news, published reports and bespoke projects. Alongside the Member support and project work, our world-renowned experts deliver cutting-edge research in areas that drive long term commercial benefit for the food and drink industry.

Leatherhead Research is a Science Group company. Science Group provides independent advisory and leading-edge product development services focused on science and technology initiatives. It has 12 European and North American offices, two UK-based dedicated R&D innovation centres and more than 400 employees. Other Science Group companies include Sagentia, Oakland Innovation, OTM Consulting and TSG Consulting.
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