



enriching business intelligence

**BIT/2022/13      October 2022**

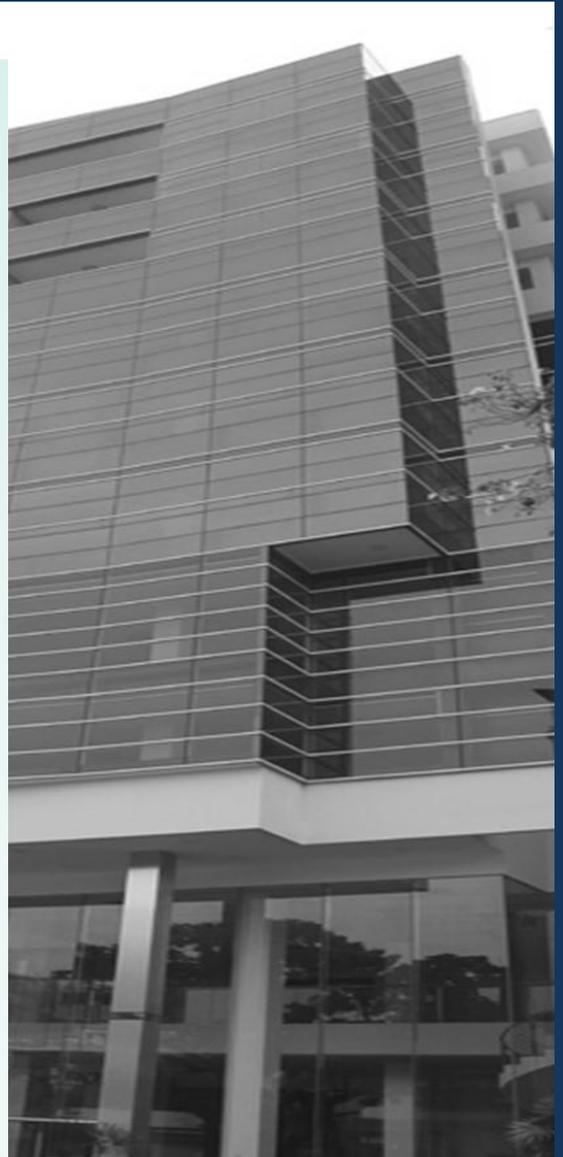
## **AN OVERVIEW ON VEGAN & PLANT-BASED FOOD PRODUCTS IN THE UK**

© 2022 Department of Commerce, Sri Lanka



**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**No.492, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
L.H.P.Building, R.A.de Mel  
Mawatha  
Colombo 03  
011-2329733/2346114**



## An Overview on Vegan & Plant-based Food Products in the UK



### Introduction

The term “vegan” was first introduced in 1944 by Donald Watson, an English animal rights advocate and the founder of The Vegan Society, to describe a person who avoids using animals for ethical reasons. Veganism refers to the practice of being vegan.

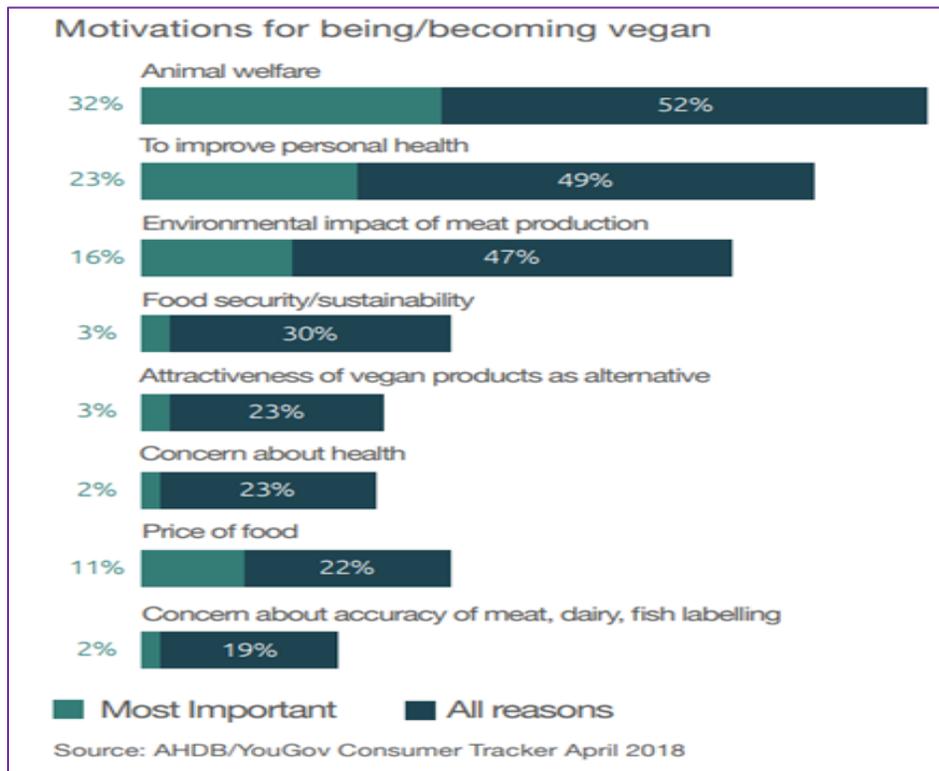
The Vegan Society in the UK defines *“Veganism is a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of animals, humans and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.”*

Amongst all the passing trends that had been adopted in the Western world, the concept of ‘Veganism’ has several anchor points such as consumers’ desire to seek good health, rapid new product developments related to meat/dairy alternatives, concern about the environment (minimizing the carbon footprint) and government support which have made it a dominant trend, especially in the UK.

Over the last decade, there has been an increasing market demand created for herbal, plant-based and meat-substitute products in the UK market. The UK's Net Zero strategy to decarbonize all sectors of the UK economy to meet net zero target by 2050 has helped to thrive/boost the concept of veganism among the UK consumers lately.

Statistics show that the concept of veganism is much more widespread among younger consumers than among the older generations in the UK. Therefore, the meat-free food consumption will become even more important in the British market in years to come.

The AHDB, UK analysis shows that animal welfare, concern about health and environmental impact of meat production are the main motivations of becoming a vegan. Therefore, vegan industry, largely the vegan food industry has become a lucrative sector for investors which attracts high levels of investment fueling development of food technology and future growth.



### Latest trend of veganism in the UK

While the majority of vegans are predominantly motivated by concerns about animal welfare flexitarians are predominantly motivated by health. Both trends are becoming increasingly popular among the Brits.

Concepts and movements such as the 'Veganuary' movement (an annual event that encourages non-vegans to adopt a vegan diet during the month of January) and 'Meatless Monday' has gained popularity and promising response in the UK for culinary, social and agricultural sectors. The UK businesses and retail giants are adjusting to meet those new demands created in the consumer market.

UK consumer demand for plant-based food has increased during the Coronavirus pandemic, as many adopt a more flexitarian diet - cutting down on meat and dairy while eating more plant-based foods. The UK market for meat substitutes is already worth over 425 million GBP, making it the largest in Europe.

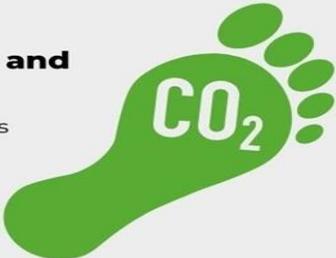
Brits pay closer attention to their health and nutrition following Covid-19. Supermarkets have reported strong sales for plant-based food and drink during the pandemic lockdowns, highlighting the shift in consumer demand towards vegan and plant-based foods, mostly driven by concerns about nutrition.

The statistics shows that a share of 4% of the total population are self-identified as vegans and it has recorded a sales revenue of vegetarian and plant-based alternatives worth 1.1 Bn GBP in 2020. By 2026, this figure is expected to reach closer to 2 Bn GBP.

**Vegan diets result in 76% less land use and 50% less greenhouse gas emissions.**

Simply changing the way we eat can have an enormous impact on combating climate change.

Source: Government Office for Science, 2011, Foresight Project on Global Food and Farming Futures Synthesis Report.



*Viva!*

Source: Government Officer for Science, 2011, Foresight Project on Global Food and Farming Futures Synthesis Report.

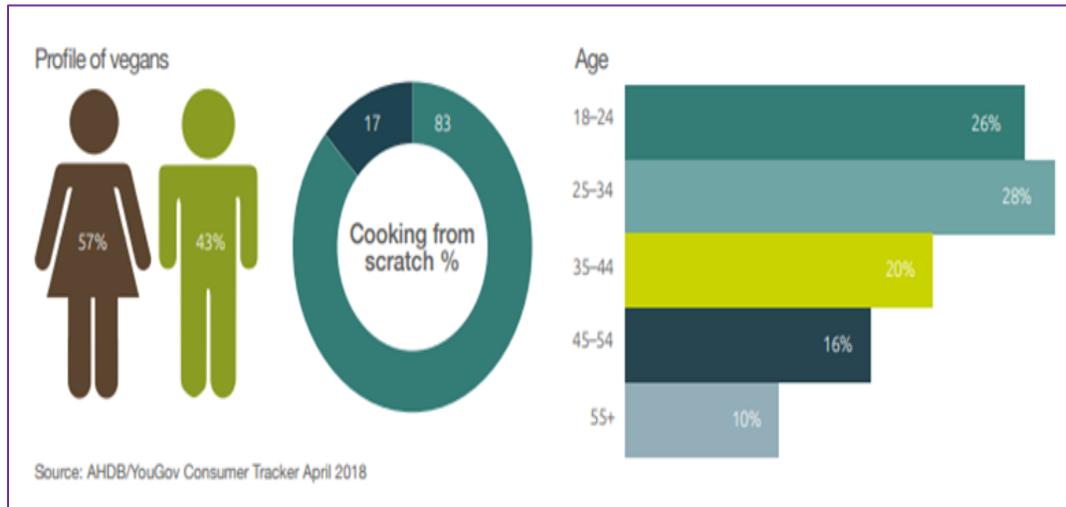
### Facts and figures on the UK Vegan Market



Source: The Vegan Society

## Profile of Vegans in the UK

As per the report published by Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, UK (AHDB) in 2018, it has been reported that the majority of vegans are female with an average of 57% and most of the vegans are tend to be in the age group of 25-34 years and tend to be preparing their own meals.



Source: AHDB/ YourGov Consumer Tracker April 2018

## Some of the popular vegan/ plant-based food products in the UK

**Jackfruit** – It has been used to replicate pork, as well as other meats. It's predicted that demand for Jackfruit will raise in the coming years as an ideal meat alternative.

**Plant-based milk** – Coconut milk, almond milk, oat milk, soya milk are some of the popular plant-based milk available in the market.

**Vegan eggs** – Plant-based egg replacements which is pea protein-based which tastes similar to conventional chicken eggs. Mostly used in preparation of pastas and desserts.

**Vegan chocolate** – Most of the leading chocolate brands including UK's Cadbury's has introduced chocolates made using plant based milk instead of dairy.

**Vegan baked goods** – Recent years have shown that plant-based cakes and bakes are becoming increasingly popular. With the introduction of new vegan egg replacements, plant-based milk and butter, vegan cakes have become increasingly popular.

Other vegan food are such as - falafels, vegan sausages, vegan soups, ready to eat meals, soya mince, vegan burgers, vegan mayonnaise and salad cream, vegan pasta sauces, vegan-friendly biscuits, ice cream and other sweet etc.

## A few of the leading Vegan brands available in the UK

- Alpro – A range of plant milks, yoghurts and desserts (including custard!)
- Booja Booja – Premium vegan ice-cream and chocolates
- Follow Your Heart – Vegan alternatives to dairy and egg products, including Vegenaise and VeganEgg
- Fry's Family Foods – Range of vegan meat alternatives, including everything from pies to stir-fry strips.

- Gosh! – GPlant-based sausages, bakes and burgers in a range of tempting flavours.
- HECK – Vegan snacks
- Koko – Coconut based alternatives to dairy products, including vegan yoghurts and flavoured milks.
- Pure Free From - Vegan spreads that are also gluten free. Quorn – Vegan fishless fingers and vegan hot and spicy burgers.
- Sacla – Vegan pesto
- Strong Roots – Healthy freezer items, vegetable fries and spinach bites.
- The Tofoo Co. – Variety of tofu
- Tofurky – A range of meat alternatives.
- VBites – A range of meat alternatives, including meatballs, fish-style steaks, bacon-style rashers and deli slices
- Vitalite – Dairy Free Spread is found in most supermarkets.
- Violife – Vegan cheeses
- Meridian - Organic and palm oil free nut and seed butters from almond to sunflower seed

### **Vegan labeling**

Most UK supermarkets have separate sections/ isles where vegan products are placed. However, most of the vegan products available are self-certified with voluntary claims on packaging such as ‘suitable for vegans’ and ‘vegetarian’. There are a few vegan trademark symbols used in the UK from organization such as ‘The Vegan Society’ and the The Vegetarian Society’. Each has different standards with which the food producers must comply. Food producers displaying these logos have to go through the certification process and producers cannot use them on a self-certification basis.

Additionally, trademark filings for new vegan food and drink products hit a record high last year. Latest figures reported in *The Guardian* reveal that companies successfully applied for 107 trademarks in 2019 for everything from ice cream to meat-free burgers – a 128% increase on the 47 recorded in 2018 – as consumer demand for vegan alternatives continued to soar.

### **Standards on vegetarian and plant-based food**

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) in the UK outlines the standards of food hygiene, guidelines on organic imports, labelling and packaging that imports of plant products and vegetarian products (chickpeas, kidney beans, tofu, peas, beans, pulses, mycoproteins such as quorn, soy products such as textured vegetable protein (TVP), millet, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds) from third countries must meet when entering the UK borders. More information can be accessed through the FSA website; <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/importing-plant-products-and-vegetarian-products>

### **Opportunities in the Vegan food market in the UK**

Considering the growing demand for vegan food, drinks and other products in the UK market, there is a potential for Sri Lanka to export plant based food products using abundantly available natural ingredients such as jackfruits, sweet potatoes, mushrooms, eggplant, soy protein, coconut products, legumes, lentils and nuts etc.

References:

- i. The Vegan Society <https://www.vegansociety.com/>
- ii The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board  
[https://projectblue.blob.core.windows.net/media/Default/Consumer%20and%20Retail%20Insight%20Images/PDF%20articles/ConsumerInsights%20WEB\\_1653\\_180725.pdf](https://projectblue.blob.core.windows.net/media/Default/Consumer%20and%20Retail%20Insight%20Images/PDF%20articles/ConsumerInsights%20WEB_1653_180725.pdf)
- iii. Statistics about veganism <https://viva.org.uk/lifestyle/statistics-about-veganism/>
- iv. <https://trulyexperiences.com/blog/veganism-uk-statistics/>

Acknowledgment of Content Contribution:

*Commercial Division, High Commission of Sri Lanka, London, UK.*

You can REGISTER to get BIT directly to your mailbox		QR	Follow Us
Click here	<a href="https://forms.gle/rXiVnEBGCg2md7Vf7">https://forms.gle/rXiVnEBGCg2md7Vf7</a>		
For comments/suggestions : <a href="mailto:fortrade@doc.gov.lk">fortrade@doc.gov.lk</a> / <a href="mailto:samantha@doc.gov.lk">samantha@doc.gov.lk</a>			