

# FAST FACTS FROM FONA: TRENDS IN THE PANDEMIC ENVIRONMENT

We're continuing to keep our finger on the pulse of how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the food and beverage industry. Plant-based foods and beverage consumption is on-the-rise as living a healthier lifestyle is still a priority for consumers. In addition, consumers face meat shortages and are seeking sustainable options and looking for more shelf-stable products. Let's take a closer look at the trends we're spotting this week.

Click [here](#) to see our previous fast facts. For more on plant-based, check out our recent reports, [Part 1: Health & Wellness](#) and [Part 2: Indulgence](#).



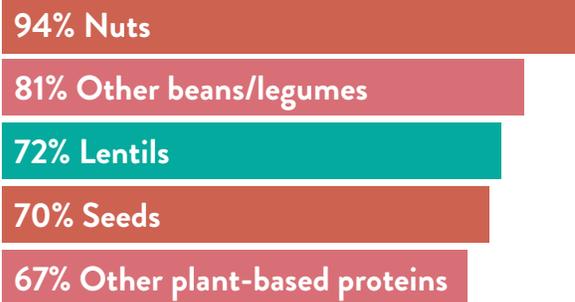
## THE PLANT-BASED CONSUMER

Consumers have been expanding their horizons as it relates to consuming more plant-based foods and beverages and have become

flexitarians and open to the many plant-based options available today. According to the beet.com 1 in 4 consumers are eating more plant-based meals since the pandemic. The New Hope Network is predicting “the rise of the ethical omnivore,” as plant-based diets have become a macro trend in today's households—moving from a diet to more of a lifestyle.

A social listening search for “plant-based” as it relates to Corona Virus is showing a 706% increase in posts from the beginning of year, with the largest spike in posts on March 15th according to Infegy Atlas. The keyword “immune system” is one that appeared in the majority of posts with 185% growth from January 1st.

## Consumers Interested in Natural Plant-Based Sources



Source: Mintel

## PLANT-BASED ON THE RISE AMID PANDEMIC

Sales of plant-based foods have considerably outpaced total foods sales in the US, according to the Plant Based Foods Association and SPINS. Plant-based food sales spiked 90% (compared to last year) at the height of pandemic buying, which is 25% higher than total food sales.

Longer shelf-life is definitely appealing to consumers as they were trying to stock-up and stretch their dollars. Fitting in that mold is oat milk, with its sales growing 476.7% in the week ending March 14, while dairy milk sales grew 32.4%, according to Nielsen.

## CATEGORIES SHOWING GROWTH

Plant-based products are showing growth in new product introductions within the US with 485% growth from 2015-2019, according to Mintel GNPD. Top plant-based categories include: meal replacement beverages; snack, cereal & energy bars; and meat substitutes. We hear mostly about meat alternatives in this space with brands like Impossible Burger and Beyond Meat, but there are some breakaway categories beyond the traditional that are showing growth.

### Breakfast Cereal

One product category that is already showing growth in 2020 with plant-based products, is breakfast cereal with 533% growth from 2019-2020.



**Three Wishes Cinnamon Grain Free Cereal**—a cereal that is high in protein, low in sugar and made with healthier ingredients.

This vegan and kosher certified product is said to be nutrient-rich with plant-based ingredients and nothing else.

#### Top Rated Product Attributes:

- natural, premium, & healthy.

-Mintel Purchase Intelligence

**“I love my cold cereal in the mornings. This cinnamon cereal with no grain, but more protein, less sugar, sounds healthy. Something I would like to try.”** Female, West, 55+

### Bakery

Bakery is the other category already showing growth in 2020 with plant-based products with 31% growth from 2019-2020.



**Maxine's Heavenly Peanut Butter Chocolate Chunk**

**Cookies**—soft baked and plant based cookies are sweetened with coconut sugar and dates,

are made from the purest ingredients, and are free from GMO, gluten and soy. According to the manufacturer, they have taken out all the unhealthy stuff and replaced it with super clean ingredients, and their ingredients were carefully curated with customer's health and wellness in mind.

#### Top Rated Product Attributes:

- tasty, indulgent treat, & filling.

-Mintel Purchase Intelligence

**“Good quantity for price. Product has great packaging, low sugar and appears to be filling. Peanut butter is what caught my eye with this product.”** Male, Northeast, 35-54

## LET'S TALK

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