

# Top Findings of the Midyear Power of Meat 2020

- Meat and poultry sales grew 34.6% amid the pandemic on more buyers and trips and greater spending per trip/buyer.**  
Reflecting unprecedented growth, the meat department sold an additional \$7.9 billion and 1.4 billion pounds between March 15 and July 26 versus year ago. Nearly half, 48%, of shoppers bought more meat to support the greater number of at-home meal occasions. Beef generated 61% of new fresh meat dollars, with particular strength for ground beef.
- Home-cooked dinners with meat jumped to 4.6 times per week, but meal planning is becoming more challenging.**  
Meals with meat and poultry are the norm, according to 76% of shoppers. Up from 12% pre-pandemic, flexitarians increased to 16% over concerns about animal welfare, health and sustainability. Five months into the pandemic, the industry has a big opportunity to help consumers who struggle with meal planning (40%) and new recipe and meal ideas (49%).
- Supply tightness caused inflation, narrower assortment and out-of-stocks, which drove different buying behaviors.**  
Led by Millennials, 51% of shoppers have bought different types, 50% different cuts and 58% different brands than they did pre-pandemic. Out-of-stocks were the primary reason for doing so, with shoppers also diverting dollars to frozen meat (33%), seafood (27%), different retailers (27%) or other proteins, such as beans/eggs (25%) or meat alternatives (11%).
- Shoppers also intentionally changed up meat purchases and 58% predict they will continue to buy a wider variety of items.**  
Cooking more meals prompted 50% of consumers to want more variety in meat purchases. Additionally, consumers bought different cuts and kinds for better value (42%), trying new recipes (37%), going to the store less often (35%) and simply experimenting with different types and cuts more now (34%).
- Nearly two-thirds of consumers say their meat IQ has improved as they intentionally or unintentionally bought differently.**  
The pandemic-driven changes in purchases have resulted in 63% of shoppers considering themselves more knowledgeable about meat. It is a simple, yet powerful formula: more knowledgeable shoppers buy a wider variety of meat/poultry cuts for more home-cooked meals. Routine, cost and lack of confidence were the meat department's biggest enemies for trial.
- Supermarkets and ecommerce won big, with 14% of shoppers changing shopping methods during the pandemic.**  
Once shelter-in-place mandates ensued, trips fell and basket size rose as shoppers consolidated purchases to limit in-store visits. Supermarkets (53%) and online sellers (3.2%) gained in channel share and dollar sales, but 52% of shoppers say they will return to their regular store post COVID. Up from 19% before, 38% of shoppers have ordered meat online amid the pandemic.
- The influence of health/nutrition, convenience and meat claims is relatively unchanged and all saw big gains.**  
Pre-pandemic, 25% of shoppers paid a lot of attention to healthy/nutritious meat choices. Now, 12% are paying less attention while 26% focus on it more. Claims-based meat sales grew 32% amid COVID-19, but 31% of shoppers said they bought it due to out-of-stocks of planned purchases. Even so, 75% of these shoppers plan to continue to buy at least some claims-based meat. Value-added meat sales increased 29.2% during the pandemic, with 63% buying them as often or more.
- Price-per-pound has always ruled the meat purchase, but the role of value and promotions is even more important now.**  
Value has become more important given meat inflation and mounting economic pressure: 46% changed cuts to save money, 32% say price per pound has a bigger influence on what and how much they buy, but 44% are seeing fewer promos. Shoppers check promotions pre-trip across stores (82%), at their main store (87%) and in the meat case (93%). More than one-quarter check for in-store specials more so now than before.
- Shoppers recognize meat for a good source of nutrients, but fewer believe it belongs in a happy, balanced diet.**  
While 75% of shoppers agree meat is an important source of protein and other nutrients, a lower 66% believe it belongs in a happy, balanced diet. There is wide disparity in agreement among the generations: 59% of Gen Z agree meat belongs in a happy, balanced diet versus 75% of Boomers.
- During the pandemic, the meat industry managed supply, food safety and employee safety well, according to shoppers.**  
Many consumers feel the meat industry did a good job keeping the supply moving amid the pandemic (51%), ensuring employee safety (42%) and maintaining food safety (42%). While these issues took the headlines, animal welfare communications remain important to 47% of consumers and 62% of flexitarians. The industry has a big opportunity to drive trust in animal protein from the angles of health, animal welfare, planet and social responsibility.

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