

## **A juicy mix**

***Meat or veggie? More consumers are flexibly switching between the two options. This benefits plant-based meat alternatives but also draws new attention to hybrid products combining plant and animal proteins. Plant-based texturates from BENEEO's Meatless® portfolio help products achieve the right bite and an attractive nutritional profile.***

The boundaries between meat consumers and those who completely avoid animal products are blurring. More consumers are moving into the veggie segment without following strict rules or banishing schnitzel, burgers and sausage from their diet. This is also the conclusion of the latest Nutrition Trend Report<sup>i</sup>, which is based on expert forecasts from science and practice: plant-based and flexitarian diets topped the trend ranking for 2025. The experts surveyed see various reasons for this, but above all the desire to improve health and eat more sustainably through a more plant-based diet. The growing group of flexitarians, who consume meat less frequently and in smaller quantities, is reflected in the statistics: in 2023, per capita meat consumption in Germany fell below 52 kilograms for the first time, according to the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE). Just five years earlier, it was almost 61 kilograms.<sup>ii</sup>

This leaves a gap on our plates. Vegetarian alternatives are trying to fill this gap but are still falling short of their full potential. This is not only due to economic factors such as inflation and rising production costs, but also to the fact that many of the products do not appeal (enough) to flexitarians in terms of taste or nutritional value. When in doubt, it is precisely these consumers who turn to other options.

## **Focus on hybrid solutions**

With its plant-based Meatless® texturates, BENEEO aims to deliver greater quality, sustainability and cost efficiency in meat and fish alternatives as well as in hybrid products. Since acquiring Dutch company Meatless B.V. in 2022, the ingredient manufacturer has extended its offering with additional expertise and a broader portfolio of plant-based texturates and semi-finished products. With its Meatless® range, BENEEO covers larger parts of the value chain and makes the further processing easier for customers. With a dedicated Meatless sales team, the company is increasingly focusing on the market for hybrid products that combine meat or fish with plant-based ingredients, thereby reducing the proportion of animal-based ingredients.

Hybrid products have clear advantages: they offer the familiar taste and texture of the original, but can be made even juicier with plant-based Meatless® texturates. They also offer additional nutritional benefits such as lower fat content. Due to ongoing price increases for meat and fish, they also lead to lower recipe costs. This is particularly interesting for beef products like minced meat or burgers, which are very price-sensitive due to their high sales volumes. Hybrid products also appeal to a broader target group than vegetarian options. A survey by BENEEO found that half of European consumers are

interested in such products. Globally, the greatest interest in purchasing was found among flexitarians. A full 71 percent of them said they would buy hybrid meat.<sup>iii</sup>

Manufacturers can therefore expect curiosity, but not necessarily a leap of faith. Greater acceptance requires high-quality products with the right taste and texture. As sensory properties and consistency depend heavily on the texturates used, manufacturers should choose them carefully.

BENEO relies on its versatile Meatless® portfolio for plant-based and hybrid solutions. The texturates, made from ingredients such as rice, faba beans, wheat or mycoprotein, are available in various particle sizes and protein contents, have a high water-binding capacity and heat stability, and ensure a juicy mouthfeel.

### **Burger patties with less meat and the same taste**

The BENEO-Technology Center is using Meatless® texturates to develop test recipes for vegan, vegetarian and hybrid solutions. Meatless® faba bean flakes, for example, have been used to develop a hybrid burger with 30 percent less beef that has a firm texture, high juiciness and a fat-like mouthfeel. The flakes reduce the fat and calorie content of the burger and can lower recipe costs. They are easy to integrate into existing recipes and production processes and have very good freeze-thaw stability.

### **More efficient development, faster time to market**

Many manufacturers see the market potential of plant-based alternatives and hybrid products and are looking for a low-threshold entry point. They hope to achieve cost efficiency and the simplest possible integration of the products into existing facilities so that they can maintain their familiar production processes while reducing their CO<sub>2</sub> footprint.

The plant-based segment remains exciting: more people are reducing their meat consumption and are open to vegetarian or hybrid options – as long as they taste good and have an affordable price. Thanks to high-quality plant-based proteins and texturates, as well as Meatless' expertise, manufacturers can develop solutions that impress in terms of taste, texture and nutritional value. With its stronger focus on holistic solutions, Meatless shows that taste, texture, cost efficiency and lower carbon footprint can be combined, whether in vegan, vegetarian or hybrid alternatives.

**END**

**About BENEIO:**

For further information on BENEIO and its ingredients, please visit: [www.beneio.com](http://www.beneio.com) and [www.beneio.com/news](http://www.beneio.com/news) or LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/beneio](http://www.linkedin.com/company/beneio)

BENEIO has long-term experience in developing and producing plant-based functional ingredients from natural sources for the food, feed and pharmaceutical industries. By supporting health and optimising taste and texture, they help improve the nutritional and technical properties of a wide variety of products.

Through a unique chain of expertise, BENEIO offers customers advice and inspiration on new product ideas that support a healthy lifestyle in a holistic way. This includes the BENEIO-Institute that provides decisive insights into nutrition science and legislation, and the BENEIO-Technology Center that consults in application technology.

Formed in 2007, BENEIO is active in over 80 countries, employs more than 1200 people and has six state-of-the-art production sites in Belgium, Chile, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands that deliver high-quality ingredients at all times.

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<sup>i</sup> NUTRITION HUB Trendreport Ernährung 2025: Prognosen von 199 Expertinnen und Experten aus dem Ernährungssektor. <https://www.nutrition-hub.de/post/trendreport-ernaehrung-trends-2025>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.ble.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2024/240404\\_Fleischbilanz.html](https://www.ble.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2024/240404_Fleischbilanz.html)

<sup>iii</sup> BENEIO Global Plant-Based & Meat Hybrids Survey 2023 - Dynata conducted an online quantitative survey in January 2023 in Germany, UK, France, Spain, Poland, USA, Brazil and Thailand (Total sample = 6167).