



Facts & Figures

Vegan trend drives meat sales into decline

In the run-up to a predicted record Veganuary, sales of frozen meat continue to suffer according to the latest figures from Kantar (52 weeks to 1st December 2019).

The latest statistics from Kantar Worldpanel reveal another difficult trading period for the frozen meat sector which has reported the biggest decline (-11.4% in volume), driven by fewer shoppers engaging with the category as well as a reduction in frequency of purchase.

It's now estimated a quarter of shoppers are actively trying to reduce their meat intake which, combined with the continued rise of vegetarian and vegan diets, is having a profound impact.

Toni Vernelli, head of communications at Veganuary, told Talking Retail before Christmas: "The Economist predicted 2019 would be the year of the vegan, but 2020 is going to blow it out of the water. With 65,000 people already pledging to try vegan with Veganuary this January, we are on course for our biggest year yet."

Indeed, the frozen vegetable category has seen increases in both value (0.2%) and volume (1.8%).

James Spicer, business unit director at Kantar Worldpanel, said: "When looking into the sector performances health is a large factor, especially within the convenience sector which can be perceived as unhealthy. Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned with making healthy and environmentally friendly choices."

The frozen ice cream and confectionery category has also seen a reversal of fortunes over the last two years. While it enjoyed a very good summer performance in 2018 due to the hot weather, 2019's summer was cooler and wetter, dampening sales in this area.

At the other end of the scale, frozen pizza has again shown impressive growth (+6.3%) driven by bigger basket size and more shoppers engaging with the category. NPD has also played a part, as manufacturers take full advantage of trends through different flavourings and toppings.

A significant contributor has been the brand refresh of Chicago Town. More premium packaging combined with a new marketing strategy has seen the brand grow +14.1%, driving the frozen pizza sector as a whole.

Richard Harrow, chief executive of BFFF, commented: "These figures reflect the changing lifestyle choices of consumers. The sectors must continue to offer innovative frozen solutions that combine these developing trends with the convenience, value and nutritional benefits of frozen."

"This presents a particular challenge for the frozen meat sector, however the rise of 'flexitarian' diets is an area that can be capitalised on. I have every confidence our industry can turn these challenges into opportunities."

