

Consumers' acceptance and perceptions of precision fermentation dairy

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Abstract

We examine consumer acceptance of dairy products made via precision fermentation (PF) when conventional and plant-based options are available. In a within-subject experiment, 390 participants made forced choices for cheese, yoghurt, milk, ice cream, and rated perceived sensorial quality for cheese and yoghurt, alongside food neophobia and food technology neophobia. PF options were generally chosen less than conventional products, yet often more than plant-based alternatives (except milk). Perceived sensorial quality strongly and negatively mediates the effect of product type on willingness to buy (WTB): lower expected taste, smell, texture, and appearance depress choice for PF and plant-based options. Moderation analyses indicate that food technology neophobia—and not general food neophobia—reduces perceived quality and WTB. Results suggest near-term opportunities for PF dairy and point the need to build familiarity, trust, and sensorial perceptions to accelerate adoption.

Track: Innovation Management & New Product Development