



Flexitarians lack nutritional knowledge and inspiration

How do you support flexitarians in eating less meat and more plant-based substitutes? By providing more information about nutritional value and cooking methods, on the packaging for instance. This was the finding of a behavioural study by Siet Sijtsema and colleagues at Wageningen Economic Research.

57 per cent of Dutch people are now flexitarians. A lot of research has been done on consumers' motives for eating less meat. When people make decisions on whether or not to eat meat, key factors are capabilities (covering knowledge and skills) and opportunities. Group discussions Sijtsema held with flexitarians revealed that they often don't know whether a vegetarian alternative has the same nutritional value as meat. Others

'Support in the family plays a role too'

find it difficult to cook a tasty vegetarian dish, for example in families where one child wants to eat vegetarian and the other doesn't.

'That social aspect, support in the family, plays a role as well.'

Meat substitutes

The availability of meat substitutes is one aspect of the daily choice between meat and vegetarian options. The supermarkets offer a wide range of meat substitutes, but they are sometimes stored in a separate corner of the shop. And in restaurants, the vegetarian menu is often limited.

Flexitarians suggested that producers of meat substitutes could show on the packaging how the nutritional value of their products compares with that of meat. They also thought the Netherlands Nutrition Centre could provide better information about which plant-based dishes are good for your health. The development of meat substitutes that resemble meat in flavour and cooking method helps some flexitarians switch to vegetarian options. 'Flexitarians who are just starting feel the need for this the most.' AS