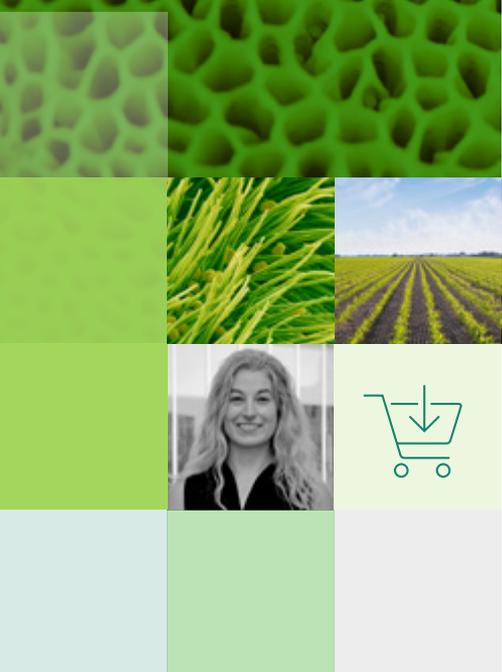


«DUPONT»

Danisco®



Meet the Taste Makers

Creating the perfect plant-based product

Taste Maker Kimberly Hogan on product development

Pioneers are in the business of conquering new markets—and that’s tough. It helps to have a guide who’s explored every inch of the terrain and can tell you where the most exciting opportunities are. Taste Maker, Kimberly Hogan has been there and done that. Here’s her take on the research that’s zeroing in on what consumers crave.

Everyone knows how important consumer testing is in plant-based product development. But what if you could predict—accurately and consistently—whether your target consumers were going to love your new product?

What if you could identify the precise sensory profile they crave but aren’t getting? A lot of our work is about looking at what’s out there. We examine the products our customers will be competing against and identify the sensory attributes consumers love and hate.

In our recently completed analysis of vanilla-flavored plant-protein beverages in North America, our 18 descriptive experts examined over 40 commercial products and identified 43 flavor attributes, 11 texture attributes and 9 nutritional measures.

Many of these products had similar sensory profiles, so we narrowed the 40 down to 15 with distinct characteristics. These were then tested by 420 consumers in three US regions.

To our surprise, we discovered that five key sensory dimensions determined whether the majority of consumers liked a product. What’s more, similar liking patterns were uncovered regardless of age, gender, location or their motivation for consuming plant-based beverages.

Which meant that any product that hit the optimal sensory dimensions across all five characteristics would also have mass market appeal.

That product has yet to be developed.

None of the products surveyed hit that sweet spot—which means there are some very attractive white spaces for new entrants.

The groundwork that’s taking the guesswork out of innovation

One of the surprising things we learnt was that consumers don’t enjoy “plant-like” flavors. They want a plant-based beverage but they don’t want it to taste like peas. Or grass. There’s a level where they’ll tolerate those flavors (*I’ll drink it because it’s good for me.*) but anything beyond that quickly becomes disagreeable. (**Tip: Think twice before piling on those green notes.**)

Planit

Your recipe for success
in plant-based



Creating the perfect plant-based product

Taste Maker Kimberly Hogan on product development

Another finding was their aversion to grittiness, chalkiness or any kind of residue in their mouths. Adding plant-based ingredients that don't stabilize well isn't always a good move—unless you're targeting niche groups who want their plant-based beverage to taste like a home-made smoothie.

But perhaps the most unexpected discovery was the fact that the least-liked product—the one with most of the characteristics people just didn't enjoy—was also the market leader.

Many people are evidently in the category for its perceived health benefits—irrespective of flavor or texture. *I'm going to slurp it down because it's healthy and that's why I bought it.*

Creating a product with a more appealing flavor profile would attract consumers who want healthy beverages but aren't prepared to drink something they don't enjoy.

The future of plant-based product development

Developing new formats is tricky. You don't want to enter solution mode too fast or you'll simply be repeating what others in the market have done. But neither do you want to waste time on formulations that are doomed to fail.

Our predictive models can give you a quick handle on how a particular formula performs from a sensory point of view, so you can develop novel formulations with characteristics that are proven to appeal.

We can help you locate desirable 'white spaces' to guide your approach. Or provide tested recommendations on how to improve the sensory profile of a formulation by tweaking key characteristics.

The plant-based market is expanding and the big brands of the future are being created now. We're here to help you predict, and seize, the most attractive opportunities.

Check out the other articles in the Taste Makers series:

Meet the Taste Makers: [Introducing the DuPont sensory scientists cracking the code of plant-based success](#)

Using neuroscience to discover the next plant-based blockbuster: [A sensory analysis briefing by Taste Makers Stine Moeller and Camilla Arndal Andersen](#)

The science of product formulation for plant-based profitability: [A business briefing by Taste Maker Rosa Sanchez](#)

Or if you think there's something the Taste Makers could help you with, [get in touch](#).



Your recipe for success in plant-based