

Cauliflower outperforms meatless burgers

Tiny entrepreneurial start-up Caulipower's vegetable-based pizza achieved \$45 million in US sales in 2018, its first full year on the market, and is anticipating \$100 million this year. That's a far more impressive performance, says Julian Mellentin, director of food business consultancy New Nutrition Business, than that of meatless burger maker Beyond Meat, which managed US grocery sales of \$50 million in the same year, despite massive publicity, hype and over \$200 million of investment.

"The success of Caulipower – and other plant-based brands just like it – underscores that consumers don't want extruded plant protein burgers as much as they want convenient, all-natural vegetables," says Mellentin, author of a new report, *"How to succeed with the plant-based food trend: Four strategies for success – and one to avoid"*.

Caulipower – and tens of brands like it, from PepsiCo's Off the Eaten Path to Love Beets – align closely with what the health-conscious consumer wants, says Mellentin. Plant-based products with short ingredient lists that are 'natural' and 'least-processed' link strongly to the eight consumer motivations that are driving the plant-based food trend, he adds.

For many consumers, for example, having even just 20% or 30% of veggies in a burger, cookie or pizza crust gives the product a health halo that makes it seem like a better choice – and, in the case of Caulipower, offers a gluten-free alternative to a conventional pizza.

"The plant-based food trend presents companies and brands with a major growth opportunity, but they need to choose strategy carefully," cautions Mellentin. "There are five strategies that food companies can choose from. One of these – plant-based meat substitutes – is already a hyper-competitive market. But there are four other strategies that offer much better opportunities for building a profitable and sustainable business."

“Burgers made from plant proteins are held up as the next growth market – and Silicon Valley investors are getting excited about their money-making potential,” he says.

“But many of these investors will be disappointed, because the meat substitute business is already underperforming and seriously overcrowded compared to other plant-based offerings, and fails to meet consumers’ needs for simple, natural and least-processed foods.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Editors can request comment or arrange an interview with Julian Mellentin, by contacting Marta Matvijev at marta@new-nutrition.com.
2. Julian Mellentin is one of the world’s few international specialists in the business of food, nutrition and health. He is director of New Nutrition Business, a research and consultancy company with an expert focus on the business of food and health since 1995. It provides case studies and analysis of success and failure in the global nutrition business and is used by more than 1,700 corporate subscribers in 42 countries. It has offices in the United States, Europe, and New Zealand and affiliates in Japan and South Korea. Find out more at: www.new-nutrition.com.
3. *“How to succeed with the plant-based food trend: Four strategies for success – and one to avoid”* is available to purchase at www.new-nutrition.com