

GLNC report reveals shift in Australia's plant-based sector quality over quantity

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The Australian plant-based market is evolving. While consumer interest remains strong, the latest audit from the Grains and Legumes Nutrition Council (GLNC) shows that overall product availability has declined since the last audit in 2022, reflecting a more mature market. The Plant-Based Report focuses on changes since 2022 across plant-based meat alternatives, milk, dairy alternatives, and ready meals, assessing category trends, nutritional composition, ingredients, and on-pack claims. The audit reveals a 33 per cent decline in products, including a 51 per cent decrease in meat alternatives and a 22 per cent reduction in plant-based milk, highlighting the significant shift in the market over the past two years.

Kathy La Macchia, General Manager of GLNC, notes that the changing market presents both challenges and opportunities for the food industry. "The plant-based market is maturing. While fewer products are appearing on shelves, consumer demand remains strong. Brands need to focus on whole food ingredients such as legumes, whole grains, and vegetables, which provide fibre, protein, antioxidants, and phytochemicals essential for health," La Macchia said.

The report highlights a growing emphasis on health-related messaging on the pack. Over the past two years, health claims on plant-based products have increased by 37 per cent, with claims for calcium and protein being the most common, alongside a rise in claims for vitamins and minerals. These statements help consumers navigate the market and make more informed

choices about nutrition.

However, not all plant-based products offer the same benefits. Many emphasise protein, while dietary fibre remains an underused opportunity, with most Australians not meeting the recommended daily intake. Products made with legumes, whole grains, vegetables, nuts, and seeds provide the greatest fibre and nutrient diversity, supporting gut health and digestion, and helping close the fibre gap.

“The plant-based sector has the potential to improve diet quality. Innovation must continue to ensure products are nutrient-rich, appealing, clearly labelled, and accessible,” La Macchia added.