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Can we cut out the meat of the dish? Constructing consumer-oriented pathways towards meat substitution.
[Journal Article]*Appetite* 2012 Feb; 58(1):39-47.

The shift towards a more sustainable diet necessitates less reliance on foods of animal origin. This study presents data from a representative survey of Dutch consumers on their practices related to meat, meat substitution and meat reduction. The practices reflected a cultural gradient of meat substitution options running from other products of animal origin and conventional meat free meals to real vegetarian meals. To investigate feasible substitution options, a variety of meals without meat were presented using photos, which were rated by the participants in terms of attractiveness and chances that they would prepare a similar meal at home. The results demonstrated the influence of meal formats, product familiarity, cooking skills, preferences for plant-based foods and motivational orientations towards food. In particular, a lack of familiarity and skill hampered the preparation of real vegetarian meals. Based on the findings we propose a diversified understanding of meat substitution and we specify four policy-relevant pathways for a transition towards a more plant-based diet, including an incremental change towards more health-conscious vegetarian meals, a pathway that utilizes the trend towards convenience, a pathway of reduced portion size, and practice-oriented change towards vegetarian meals.

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