

THE PLANT-BASED REVOLUTION



Growing concerns over global warming, the ethics of factory farming and the impact of animal products on human health have given rise to an entire new category of food and beverage products under the label of Plant-Based Foods where meat, fish, dairy and eggs are being replaced by vegetables, nuts, beans and grains.

However, the bulk of the consumers of these products are not vegans or vegetarians but flexitarians – who are reducing the amount of animal products they consume. One in three Americans now considers themselves a flexitarian and 10% are vegan or vegetarian. Many of the trends that emerge in western markets soon arrive in the Middle East and this one has landed

As 'flexitarianism' goes mainstream, the Middle East's Food Specialities Limited is pioneering the region's meat alternatives

in the UAE with Emirates Airlines ramping up their selection of vegan offerings, Beyond Meat burgers becoming available at restaurants and retailers and with the world's largest vegan restaurant opening its doors in Dubai earlier this year.

Saudi Arabia has also launched over 65 vegan friendly restaurants and plant-based offerings are increasing on the retail shelves. Key personalities in the region who have turned to veganism such as Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed bin Talal Al Saud, have been instrumental in promoting the dietary shift in the region.

Global Food Industries (GFI) and Food Specialities Limited (FSL) have been two of the key players pioneering in this field who are working together to create plant-based meat alternatives to create a healthier and more sustainable food ecosystem in the Middle East.

According to Dhruv Dhawan, FSL's Head of Marketing and Innovation, "In collaboration with GFI and one of our key supply partners, Van Hees, we have developed a

wide range of plant-based offerings such as burgers, meat strips and chicken tikka nuggets that are adapted to suit the taste profile of our region."

FSL has also been pioneering in the field of plant-based milks, Manish Roy, GM of FSL's dairy ingredients unit says: "We have been keeping a close eye on this market and sampled the dairy alternatives being imported into the UAE at very high prices and felt there was a lot of room for improvement... we went into our labs and our dairy technologists, developed new recipes for oat, almond, soy and cashew milks which were creamier and cheaper than the competition - and entirely clean label! We are now developing these products for some of our customers in the region who are eager to grow their business in this emerging market. We are also developing other products in this sector with vegan cultures from our partners DuPont."

FSL will be showcasing and sampling their plant-based dairy and meat alternatives at their innovation lab which is located at Sheikh Saeed Hall 1 Stands S1-B36 & S1-A36.