

GREENFOOD INSIGHTS

HOW NON-RADICAL VEGAN FOOD MADE KIDS IN SWEDEN GO PLANT-BASED OVERNIGHT

(and so can everyone)



WELCOME TO GREENFOOD INSIGHTS!

The food industry is constantly changing – in the age of green transition, digitalization and rapid trends. With Greenfood Insights, we explore this development, one topic at a time.

We take a closer look at major changes in our eating habits, how food is produced and developments in the industry, but also take inspiration from remarkable pilot projects that can guide us in making the big decisions. Food is an essential part of society, and the trends that shape our eating habits often reflect a wider context.

We are one of northern Europe's leading groups in healthy food, and we see the food industry reshaping and reinventing itself every day. With Greenfood Insights, we hope to spread knowledge, and at the same time inspire stakeholders, individuals and industry colleagues to rethink.

We are very proud of the fact that our product range is currently 90% vegan. Our world is filled with fruits, vegetables and plant-based proteins. But we want to inspire others to make that shift. As a Swedish player in the global green sector, we are convinced that a change is possible.

Therefore, in this edition of Greenfood Insights, we highlight a pilot project that, through a vegan nudge, made children all over Sweden go vegan. The insights can affect everyone's eating habits, and the nearly 780 000 plant-based servings tell us a lot about the future of sustainable food.

Enjoy reading!



If we could get all Europeans to eat climate-friendly once a week, it would reduce carbon emissions by 221 000 tons per year.

Kristoffer Sunér, tell us why it is important to change our eating habits!

– Eating should be joyful. But what we eat is a major contributor to many of the planetary and human challenges ahead. Almost 30% of the global CO2 emissions can be traced to our food, and the production of food consumes up to 70% of drinking water. From an individual perspective, lifestyle-related diseases are the most common cause of premature death in Europe today. A change is needed here!

What can the Street Food Weeks pilot project teach us?

– The school canteens are like living food labs, where you can really see what works. Kids can be very picky, but they still dared to choose plant-based. It's motivating! Just imagine the effect if we do this on a larger scale!

Is it possible to scale up?

– Yes! And here, we can draw inspiration from another company within the Greenfood group, Picadeli, known for their self-selection salad bars. A Picadeli salad emits an average of 0.8 kilos of carbon dioxide. That is almost half of a standard European lunch which emits an average of 1.48 kilos. If we could get all Europeans to eat a climate-friendly lunch, once a week, it would reduce carbon emissions by 221 000 tons per year. Cutting emissions and becoming healthier doesn't have to be more difficult than that.



The typical Swedish school lunch is free

The free school lunch in Sweden is almost unique; only in a handful of other countries kids are offered lunch for free. Free school lunches were gradually introduced across Sweden from the mid-1940s. Today, around one million children attend Swedish primary schools. That's a lot of lunches – every day.

Kristoffer Sunér, Sustainability Manager
Healthy Food Lead, Greenfood

LESSONS FROM 772 000 VEGGIE SCHOOL MEALS



SWEDISH PILOT PROJECT GETS KIDS TO SKIP MEAT AT SCHOOL

How can a Swedish food nudge inspire more people to choose plant-based food? Explore the pilot project that has generated 772,000 vegetarian portions, and inspired thousands of students to cut out meat for lunch. The insights are crucial to anyone who wants to endorse a green nudge. So what does it take to get the new generation to go plant-based? The answer is street food, and no bullshit.

To reach the UN's Global Goals, we need to change our eating habits – and in particular, eat less meat. What future generations put on their plates can be crucial to our success. So, how can we encourage children and young people to go vegetarian more often?

This was the question posed by one of Europe's key players in healthy and sustainable food, Greenfood, together with its group company Ahlströms. The solution? A modern food concept which brings street food into the school cafeteria, named Street Food Weeks.

Burger Tuesday, Let's Wok Monday, Mexican Friday

Burger Tuesday, Let's Wok Monday or Mexican Friday – the concept is that students are served a weekly menu of tasty, trend-setting dishes created with their taste buds in mind. The food is presented in an appetizing setting, where everything from cool signs to an inviting presentation enhances the experience.

The concept has now been tested in 47 Swedish cities since its launch in 2019, and 772 000 vegetarian portions (which would normally have consisted of meat, fish or poultry!) later, it's clear:

STREET FOOD WEEKS IN NUMBERS

772 000

How many plant-based portions were served during Street Food Week

47

How many Swedish cities have participated since the start in 2019

From 10% plant-based to 77% - in a week!

On a typical school day, 1 out of 10 students eat a plant-based lunch. During Street Food weeks, more than half of the pupils choose to skip meat, and in some cities as many as 77% choose vegetarian!





it is possible to get children and young people to eat more plant-based. During Street Food Week, the school chefs collect statistics on the number of students choosing vegetarian options. On a typical school day, around 10 % go for the plant-based lunch. During the Street Food weeks, more than half of the student choose to skip meat. In some municipalities, as many as 77% of students eat vegetarian during the theme week.

Every day, over a million school lunches are served in Sweden – and while surveys show that students are positive about vegetarian food, the majority of the meals remain non-vegetarian. The insights gained from Street Food Weeks play a crucial role in solving the puzzle of encouraging more people to choose vegetarian options.

“Our theme weeks have taught us that the future of plant-based food is fun, stylish and trendy. With the right implementation, it is completely possible to get young people to broaden their horizons, try new dishes and eat more plant-based! From 10% plant-based - to 77% in a single week! Fantastic!” says Jacob Ahlström, CEO of Ahlströms.

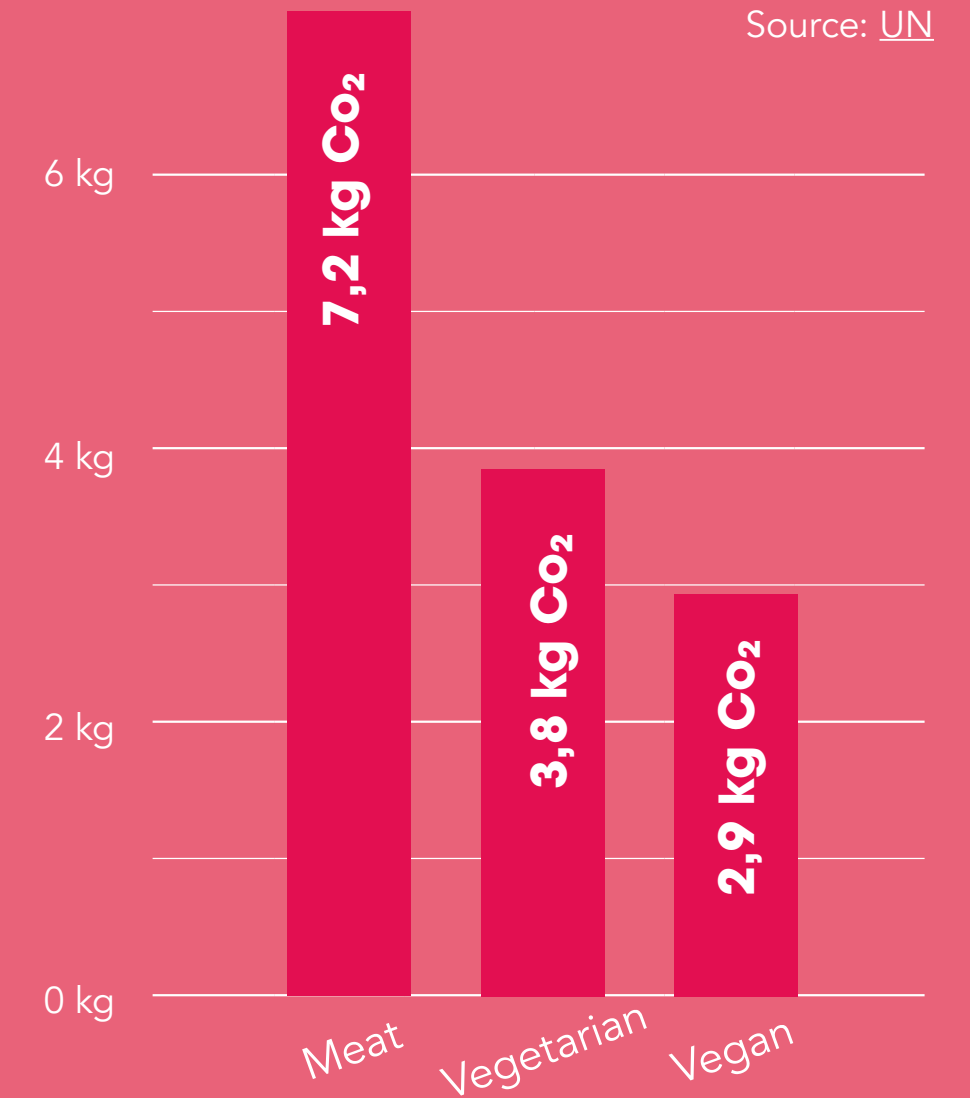


When school children are in charge, plant-based tacos, poké bowls and noodle woks are the order of the day.

 **THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

Greenhouse gas emissions per kilogram of food

A standard meat-based diet generates about 7.2 kg of CO₂ equivalents per day, while a vegetarian diet generates 3.8 kg and a vegan diet 2.9 kg. So what are we waiting for?



TO MEET THE UN CLIMATE GOALS, OUR MEALS SHOULD HAVE AN AVERAGE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF...

0,5 kg CO₂

TODAY, A SWEDISH LUNCH OR DINNER HAS AN AVERAGE CLIMATE IMPACT OF...

1,8 kg CO₂

THE FOOD SECTOR ACCOUNTS FOR
30%
of global emissions

THE MEAT INDUSTRY ACCOUNTS FOR
14,5%
of global emissions*

* According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

5 WAYS TO PROMOTE A GREEN NUDGE TO KIDS AND YOUTHS

Are you interested in learning more, or do you want your school to carry out a Street Food Week? Please contact felix.strandvik@ahlstroms.se

1.

Veganize their favorite foods

Kids are picky, we know that. So instead of serving them complicated options that they don't recognize, we offer food they actually like - but plant-based. The world's easiest nudge! While kids may find stews and scrambles a bit challenging, simple and accessible dishes are their cup of tea!

2.

Make it look good

There is a Swedish saying: "You eat with your eyes." And it's true! We've also found that cool signs and menus that evoke a cool street environment tend to make the kids more likely to like the concept. And in the end, choose the plant-based option.

3.

Don't rub it in

Street Food Week is, indeed, focused on vegetarian options - yet, it's not something to actively promote. Instead, we find fun ways to describe the food that will spark students' curiosity. Burger Tuesday, Let's Wok Monday or Mexican Friday, for example! Kids love nuggets, but honestly, they don't care if it's chicken.

4.

Highlight the meatless option

The meat is often the star of the meal. We need to stop doing that! On the contrary, during Street Food Weeks, vegetarian food takes center stage and is the first thing students encounter when they enter the lunchroom. It's a winning concept!

5.

Create a restaurant vibe

It's no secret that children and young people love going to fast food restaurants. In the Street Food project, we created a trendy graphic material inspired by the classic fast food chains. Here, the project's menus, signage and branding create the right feeling! Success!



Behind the concept is Ahlströms and their experts on plant-based food, a company that has been developing the vegetarian range in Swedish stores and restaurants since 2010. Ahlströms is now a part of the Swedish group Greenfood, a company who has been working with healthy and sustainable food for decades.

THE KIDS SAY YES!

Johan Husgafvel, Team Leader and Meal Developer responsible for 6 school kitchens in Helsingborg tells us about the children's response:

– Around 20 000 children eat lunch every day in our school canteens. During Street Food Week, we served 14,000 plant-based meals every day. 70% of the students decided to skip the meat! We need to shift towards a more plant-based diet, and events like these serve as a good introduction.

For others who want to try similar initiatives, Johan has some advice:

– The key is to go slowly and to not make too many changes too quickly. For example, try going 50/50 and replacing half of the meat with plant-based ingredients in, for example, patties. It is wise to not go all in from the start.

WHAT ABOUT THE ADULTS?

Ann-charlott Sjöqvist, Change Manager Sustainability at Coor, explains why they are promoting vegetarian street food in their canteens across the country:

– We continuously try to get our guests to like and request more plant-based food! It is important for the environment, the climate and also for our health. We are certainly not saying that everyone has to become a vegetarian, but today we eat far too much meat per person.

What do the guests think? Ann-charlott shares her thoughts:

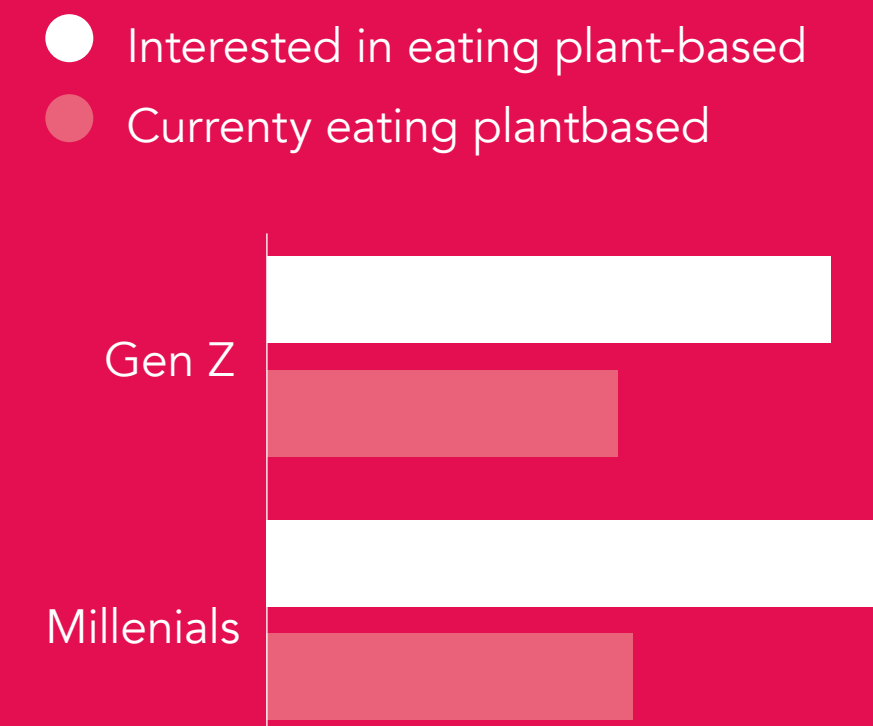
– We have noticed that it is important to start with food they recognize and are positive about – which is why the Street Food concept is very important and useful for us. There are always guests who are apprehensive of trying the concept, but the ones who attend are very positive. So for us it's all about continuing, and each time we actually manage to convince more people to switch to a plant-based lunch.



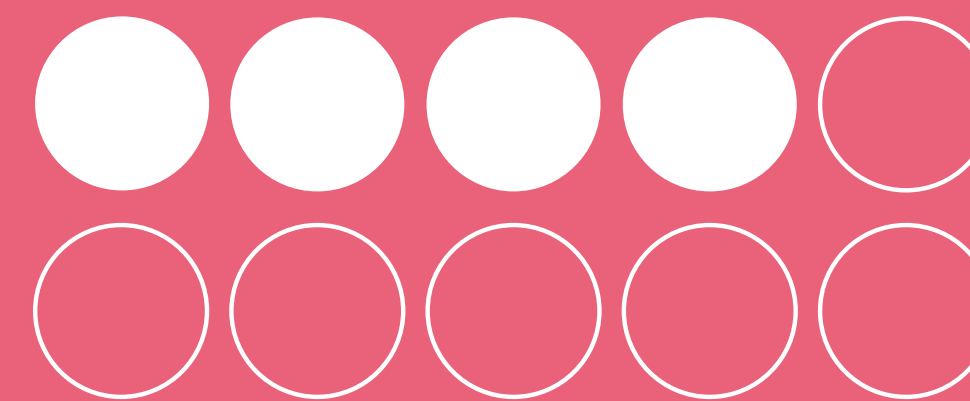
THE SHIFT TOWARDS A MORE PLANT-BASED PLANET

The green revolution belongs to the youth

The interest in trying plant-based diets is growing across the globe, especially among the younger generations. 40 percent of Gen Z, and 43 percent of Millennials say they are very interested in trying this way of eating.



Source: EAT Forum



4 OUT OF 10

think most people will be eating plant-based food instead of meat in the next decade.

Source: Veg News

ACCORDING TO PICADELI'S VEGOCRACY REPORT 2023...



SWEDES NEVER EAT PLANT-BASED PROTEIN SOURCES.



In Karlstad, we've long focused on cutting meat consumption, replacing it with top-notch vegetarian dishes to foster our students' appreciation and awareness of the benefits. During Street Food Week, a huge number of students chose the vegetarian lunch.

– Alain Grenard, Dietary Manager, High school and Adult Education Administration, Karlstad Municipality



TRENDS AHEAD – GREENFOOD FORECAST

So, now we've established that plant-based is the way of the future. Here are the trends that will influence our vegetarian and vegan eating habits in the years to come:

Plant-based food, with... plants!

If the 21st century so far has been about 3D-printed meat, lab-grown steaks and artificial foods, 2024 is the year when we turn our attention to the world of plants again. We want to see vegetarian dishes bursting with peas, legumes, mushrooms and vegetables. Short lists of ingredients. But this is not, as it used to be, synonymous with "slow food". On the contrary, it can be falafel made from grey peas or steaks from lentils – fast is fun!

The rise of plant-based fast food

Carefree, sustainable and tasty. The vegetarian food of the future needs to satisfy our senses and work with our busy lives. It is no coincidence that all of the major fast food players are inviting vegetarians to the table! In ten years, the global market for vegan fast food is predicted to be worth \$28 billion. This compares to \$19 billion today. ([Source](#)) And this development goes hand in hand with an increasing demand for plant-based alternatives. The vegan sector will double by 2027, reaching a value of \$92 billion ([Source](#))

Mindful eating

Forget the dirty vegan trend which dominated the internet a few years ago. Now we no longer want to eat the first junk food that come along, even if it's plant-based. Instead, the focus is on mindfulness - also when eating. The idea is that meals should not only satisfy the taste buds and curb our hunger, but also offer a moment of presence and well-being. With carefully selected ingredients that are healthy and sustainable, the sense of awareness is enhanced. It's also about enjoying the visual. That's why we choose beautiful, colorful ingredients!

And briefly about... social eating!

The plant-based revolution and social media go hand in hand. Pancake cereal, feta cheese pasta, baked broccoli, mala tofu... Already in 2021, the top ten food trends on TikTok were vegetarian or vegan. A development that by no means has slowed down. Zucchini fries, pasta chips and vegan cheese are some of the latest viral food trends. In 2023, the social media campaign Veganuary attracted over 700,000 participants from every country in the world except for two. In addition, the campaign's message reached over 155 million people.





DRIVEN BY OUR FIRM BELIEF IN THE POWER OF GREEN

We're not here to tell you that fruit and vegetables are healthy, climate friendly and yada yada. Everyone knows that. Besides, we already do our fair share of veggie propaganda just by existing. After all, selling fruit and veggies and making them more accessible and easier to consume is our passion.

We truly believe that people need balance and freedom of choice in life. Therefore, we have decided to never try to talk anyone out of things they really enjoy. If people like to eat burgers – fine. Let us help to make them a little healthier and yummiier. We have delivered our freshly cut and crisp salad to fast food giants for decades, without making a big deal out of it. A vast innovation back then. But we've also started our own super-healthy fast-food brand with smart salad bars, so convenient it can be sneaked into any grocery store. Everything to support public health, or *folkhälsa*, as we say in Sweden.

Yup, that's right! We're a Swedish player in the global green sector. Coming from the promised land of moderation where inventions like the *fruktstund* (an obligatory break with free fruit for the kids) is an institution that runs deep throughout the Swedish school system. It's an ace up our sleeve to succeed with our secret plan: To get people to eat more fruit and vegetables – by all means necessary.



GREENFOOD

Find out more at www.greenfood.com