Mines-Ponts 2024 – Expression écrite

Sales at vegan burger maker Beyond Meat fall by almost a third

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The US company, whose plant-based products include "burgers that appear to bleed" and imitations of sausages and meatballs, has cut its annual revenue forecast in the latest sign that the fake meat food bubble is bursting. After several years of rapid expansion fuelled by a splurge of private equity investment, meat substitutes have dropped off many menus. Sales unexpectedly slid 6% in the UK last year.

Vegan specialists including Meatless Farm of Leeds and Lincolnshire-based Plant & Bean, which supplied companies including Quorn and Tesco's Wicked Kitchen, called in administrators earlier this year as they battled lacklustre sales and hefty cost increases. Meanwhile, Sweden's Oatly, the Swiss food company Nestlé and the London-based Innocent Drinks, which is owned by Coca-Cola, are among those that have pulled vegan products from sale in the UK this year.

As the cost of living crisis has put pressure on household budgets, shoppers have turned to cheaper proteins including processed meat and traditional vegan or vegetarian options such as chickpeas, lentils and beans.

Alice Pilkington, a food analyst at Mintel, said people expected that cutting down on meat would save them money but the price of fake meat products was becoming "increasingly a barrier as they were on a par or more expensive than meat or more traditional alternatives".

Enthusiasm has also been dampened by concerns about the highly processed nature of some fake meats, highlighted by recent investigations into the health impacts of ultra-processed foods, as well as a shift towards cooking from scratch using basic ingredients during the Covid pandemic lockdowns.

Ethan Brown, the chief executive of Beyond Meat, said the ambiguity around the health benefits of eating plantbased meat had held back sales.
"This change in perception is not without encouragement from interest groups who have succeeded in seeding doubt and fear around the ingredients and process used to create our and other plant-based meats," he said. The company is now forecasting that sales will fall by at least 9% this year to no more than $380m, down from previous hopes of up to $415m.

Adapted from *The Financial Express*, August 28, 2023

Questions

1. According to the article, what are the main reasons why consumers are shifting away from alternatives to meat consumption? Answer the question in your own words (80 words, ±10%)

2. In your opinion, to what extent should ethical and sustainable eating be further encouraged? (180 words, ± 10%)

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1- Read the question

2- Find the points in the text that will answer it

3- **Organise** them and answer **in your own words**

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interest group, any association of individuals or organizations, usually formally organized, that, on the basis of one or more shared concerns, attempts to influence public policy in its favour.

They attempt to achieve their goals by **lobbying**—that is, by attempting to bring pressure to bear on policy makers to gain policy outcomes in their favour.

britannica.com

MAIN REASONS:

- Alternatives to meat are too expensive
- Concerns about the impact on health
- Cooking from scratch
- Lobbying from the meat industry

Consumers thought that eating less meat would save them money, but with the cost-of-living crisis, the price of fake meat has become a major obstacle. **Add to this** the Covid crisis, during which people starting using basic ingredients for cooking, a trend that has continued ever since, and the demand for convenience foods, including fake meat products has fallen dramatically[1]. Meat substitutes are e**ven less** attractive now that, **owing in part to**[2] aggressive lobbying, there is growing suspicion about the impact of ultra-processed foods on health.

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[1] Dramatically = de façon spectaculaire

[2] Owing to = due to = because of

Extrait du rapport de jury Mines-Ponts 2020 :

En un nombre de mots si limité, il **n'est pas souhaitable de proposer d'introduction ni de conclusion.**

De plus, pour cette question, il s'agit de **faire valoir le point de vue du journaliste** (« *according to the journalist* ») **et non pas celui du candidat** : c'est en effet la capacité de ce dernier à bien entendre et à restituer un propos argumenté qui est sollicitée ici. Les ajouts d'information et autres commentaires personnels sont donc à proscrire, tout autant que les formulations lourdes et peu efficaces telles que « *according to the journalist from The Economist* », « *in the journalist's opinion* » et autres « *the journalist gives his point of view* ». Ce type de métalangage est stérile et dessert le candidat, délayant inutilement un propos qui au contraire doit viser à un équilibre entre concision et densité. De même, les phrases de conclusion commençant par « *in a nutshell* » (à proscrire), « *all in all* », voire « *to cut a long story short* », outre leur inélégance, sont absolument hors de propos dans le cadre de cette question.

Il n'est cependant pas interdit de structurer sa réponse, ce qui dans le cas de la question de cette année était tout à fait possible et permettait d'éviter un désagréable effet de liste.

Enfin, la question doit être lue attentivement afin d'éviter le hors-sujet : **il ne s'agit pas de résumer tout le texte** mais bien de répondre à une question précise par un repérage des éléments de réponse pertinents.

Vocabulary		
to wane	/weɪn/	décliner, diminuer
forecast	/ˈfɔː.kæst/	prévision
a splurge	/splɜːrdʒ/	A large or excessive amount of sth
lacklustre	/ˈlækˌlʌstər/	terne, sans éclat
hefty	/ˈhɛfti/	important, gros, imposant
household	/ˈhaʊs.həʊld/	foyer, ménage
to cut down on	/ˈkʌt daʊn ɒn/	réduire (sa consommation de)
to dampen	/ˈdæmpən/	atténuer, refroidir,
from scratch	/frəm skrætʃ/	à partir de zéro, à partir de rien
to seed doubt	/siːd daʊt/	semer le doute