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CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF PLANT-BASED FOODS

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Plant-based foods are increasingly gaining attention due to growing consumer awareness of health, environmental sustainability, ethical concerns, and population growth. These products appeal to vegetarians, vegans, and flexitarians, who seek to reduce or eliminate animal-derived foods. Despite this expanding interest, the acceptance of plant-based alternatives faces challenges, particularly regarding sensory properties such as taste, texture, and overall experience, as well as consumer skepticism about their perceived health and sustainability benefits. However, bridging the sensory gap between plant-based and animal-derived foods remains a critical focus for product developers, then, the consumers prioritize attributes like appealing flavor, desirable texture, and robust nutritional profiles. Many consumers still favor the familiarity of traditional products, which underscores the importance of innovation in mimicking these characteristics without compromising the unique benefits of plant-based alternatives. To address these barriers, technological advancements such as ingredient blending, fermentation, and novel processing techniques have been employed, improving both sensory appeal and functionality. These innovations enhance the acceptance of plant-based foods by delivering products that closely align with consumer expectations. Additionally, effective marketing strategies play a crucial role in reshaping perceptions, emphasizing the ethical, health, and environmental advantages of these alternatives. Although the market for plant-based foods is rapidly growing, achieving widespread adoption requires a balanced approach that integrates scientific innovation, sensory optimization, and a deep understanding of consumer preferences. Continued research and development efforts are essential to creating products that appeal to a broader audience while maintaining the core values of sustainability and health consciousness. In conclusion, the future of plant-based foods depends on their ability to offer a compelling combination of taste, nutrition, and ethical appeal, ensuring their place as a viable and sustainable alternative in global food systems.

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