The Vegan Society

Bryant Research

VEGANISM AROUND THE WORLD

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and scope

This report maps the current global landscape of veganism and associated factors to inform individuals, advocates, policy-makers and industry professionals about the growth of veganism and areas of opportunity for progressing vegan solutions. Information was collected through the following methods.

(i) Analysis of existing international data, including per capita animal product consumption, number of animal product alternative companies and number of vegan restaurants.

(ii) An original online survey conducted in 10 countries, involving approximately 2000 participants (around 200 per country), to gather novel insights into the prevalence and perception of veganism.

(iii) The development of detailed, expert-reviewed profiles for 21 countries, examining factors that contribute to the growth of veganism in key regions.

This report is largely comparative and descriptive; we do not aim to provide concrete explanations for particular findings. However, whenever possible, we do present context and potential explanations for our findings. The objective of this report is to provide a rounder and richer understanding of the growth of veganism globally, with fresh insights into where there are opportunities for further growth. Individuals might use this report to understand which countries might be the most 'vegan-friendly' travel destinations, businesses might use it to inform future product marketing, whereas advocacy organisations might use it to decide on new territories in which to expand campaigns.

Methods

Desk Research. We conducted desk research to build a robust database of cross-national data, collating country-specific data points such as:

- the population of vegans
- the number of vegan and other animal-focused non-governmental organisations
- the number of vegan restaurants
- the number of animal product alternative companies
- rates of import, export, production and consumption of animal products
- agricultural employment and GDP percentages.

This database forms the foundation of the quantitative analyses throughout this report and is available for reference, including further explorations and analyses. Additional desk research not represented in this database, but present in the report, includes Google Trends output and community-driven translations of the term 'vegan'.

Original polling. We prioritised 10 countries (out of the 21 countries of interest) for further analysis via the original polling: Australia, Canada, Denmark, India, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA. These countries were chosen based on their wide regional spread and potentially favourable markets for vegan expansion as informed by The Vegan Society's commercial information, naturally limited by budget and time constraints. These surveys captured diet self-identification, recent food frequency behaviour, definitional understanding of the term 'vegan' and sentiment towards vegetarians/vegans and vegetarianism/veganism.

Qualitative analysis. AI deep research tools were employed to generate individual country profiles for each of the 21 countries of interest:

- USA
- Canada
- Mexico
- Brazil
- Japan
- China
- South Korea
- India
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Russia
- Denmark
- Germany
- The Netherlands
- Israel
- Türkiye
- Zimbabwe
- Cameroon
- Kenya
- Nigeria
- South Africa

These profiles present the qualitative factors that inhibit and facilitate vegan uptake in the country, including political, cultural, historical, economic, religious, geographical and linguistic factors.

Headline findings

• **The term 'vegan' is widely understood.** Despite the term being coined less than a century ago, veganism is well understood globally, spanning different languages and cultures. In fact, many languages have adopted the term 'vegan' itself into their own vocabulary, rather than creating their own terminology.

• **Best countries for vegan foodies.** New Zealand has the most dining options for vegans globally per capita, dominated not by dedicated vegan restaurants, but by non-vegan/non-vegetarian restaurants having vegan options on the menu. However, if you are looking for the most dedicated vegan restaurants, Taiwan should be at the top of your travel list.

• **Veganism is rare in much of the world, but flexitarianism has gained major traction.** In our 10-country survey, flexitarians represented 16–30% of almost every country's sample. The sole exception to this rule was Japan, with a flexitarian rate of 7%. Interest in animal product reduction appears quite high overall, although this has not yet translated into an embrace of 100% plant-based eating. India may be closest to such an embrace, with 14% of our sample reporting a vegan diet.

• **Veganism isn't the 'big bad wolf'.** Despite the prevalence of anti-vegan media and stereotypes, people's feelings towards veganism and towards vegans themselves appear mostly neutral and actually lean towards positive in most cases.

• **Predictions realised.** The USA sweeps the stage when it comes to the number of animal product alternative companies. But when we consider companies per capita, Singapore comes out on top. Interestingly, back in 2017, the Sentience Institute predicted that Singapore would be one of the earliest adopters of cultivated meat. Three years later, Singapore became the first country to approve and sell cultivated meat and it continues to be a leader in both plant-based and cultivated alternatives.

• **Where's the beef … but, more importantly, where did it come from?** India, despite not having a dedicated beef industry, is the fourth highest producer and exporter of beef. While seemingly paradoxical, this dynamic largely exists because of India's extremely prolific dairy industry. The dairy and beef industries are deeply intertwined. Male calves and 'spent' dairy bovines (bovines that no longer produce sufficient milk) have no utility for the dairy industry, so are slaughtered for their meat.

We use the term 'bovines' here to emphasise a semantic distinction: India's beef production/export is principally carabeef (meat from water buffalo). Although both bovines, water buffalo do not carry the same sacred status as cows in India, making their slaughter (and even domestic consumption) permissible and common.

• **Eating and abstaining.** Israel leads in alternative proteins, but remains a major consumer of poultry (ranked first globally) and beef (ranked fourth globally). We can largely attribute this to their low consumption of pig meat (only 1.15 kg/capita annually) due to religious dietary laws (pork is not kosher for Jews, not halal for Muslims). Despite Israel's strong position in alternative proteins and a cultural context that could favour plant-based options, consumption habits in Israel indicate that there is more work to be done.

• **Trending.** According to Google Trends data, searches for veganism is significantly more popular than vegetarianism and dramatically more popular than climate change, one of the most pressing issues of our time.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Background

The Vegan Society has pioneered work to promote veganism in the UK and around the world for more than 80 years. While veganism has made significant strides in this time, rates of awareness, understanding and the practice of veganism differ dramatically around the world. In this report, we present quantitative data on a number of variables related to veganism around the world, as well as further qualitative insights on a key selection of 21 countries. These countries were selected using indications from The Vegan Society's commercial, campaigns and research work suggesting that these countries would benefit from particular attention.

The 21 key countries selected for further analysis

North America
USA
Canada

Latin America
Mexico
Brazil

Western Europe
Germany
Denmark
The Netherlands

Eastern Europe
Russia

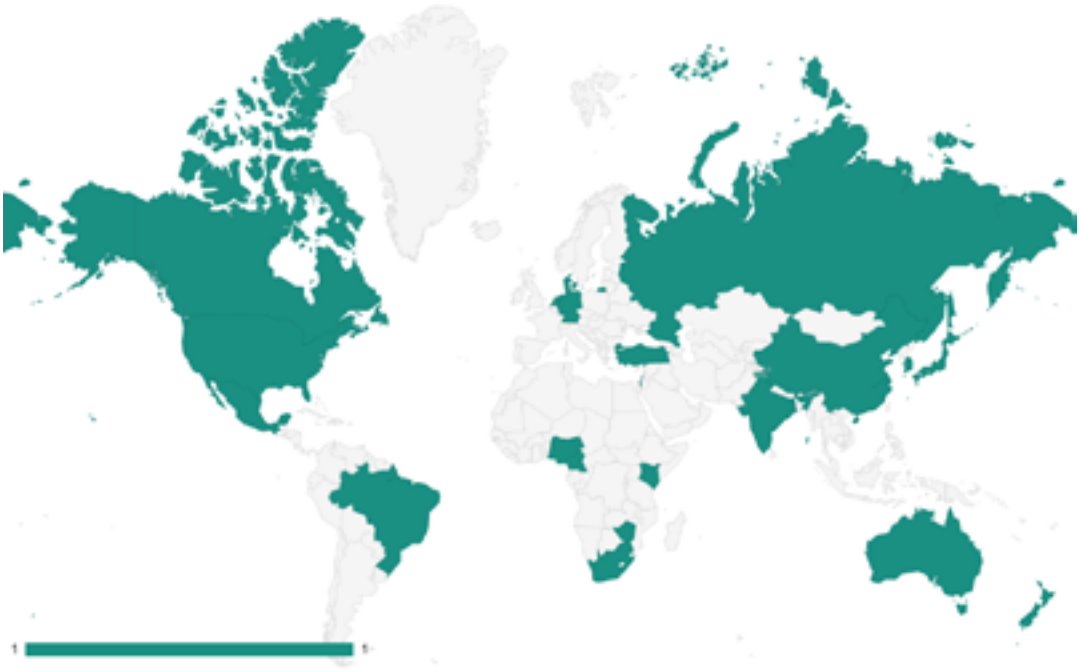
Sub-Saharan Africa
Zimbabwe
Cameroon
Kenya
Nigeria
South Africa

Middle East
Israel
Türkiye

East Asia
China
Japan
South Korea

South Asia
India

The Pacific
Australia
New Zealand



1.2. Methods

We conducted a robust, three-stage research process.

1 **Desk research**. This entailed compiling quantitative datasets from various sources on different variables related to veganism. In brief, these included the following data per country:

- vegan and other animal-centred organisations
- animal product alternative companies
- vegan restaurants and dining options
- government and legal support for animals
- civic activism
- animal product production, import, export and consumption rates
- agricultural employment
- proportion of GDP corresponding to agriculture
- internet search trends related to veganism
- translations of the term 'vegan'.

2 **National expert reports.** This entailed using AI research tools to build draft country reports on the 21 key countries. National experts from each of the countries then manually reviewed the draft reports and provided feedback to produce the final 21 country reports. These were then condensed into infographics for quick reference.

3 **Online questionnaire.** This entailed recruiting a sample of 2000 survey participants across 10 of the key countries (200 per country using a wide geographical spread) to

generate novel empirical data about the prevalence of, and attitudes towards, veganism around the world. These surveys specifically investigated the following variables:

- self-identification of diet
- recent food frequency behaviour
- definitional understanding of the term 'vegan'
- sentiment towards vegetarians/vegans and vegetarianism/veganism.

More details about our precise methods, including all data sources and survey questions, are available in the supplementary materials.

1.3. Use Cases

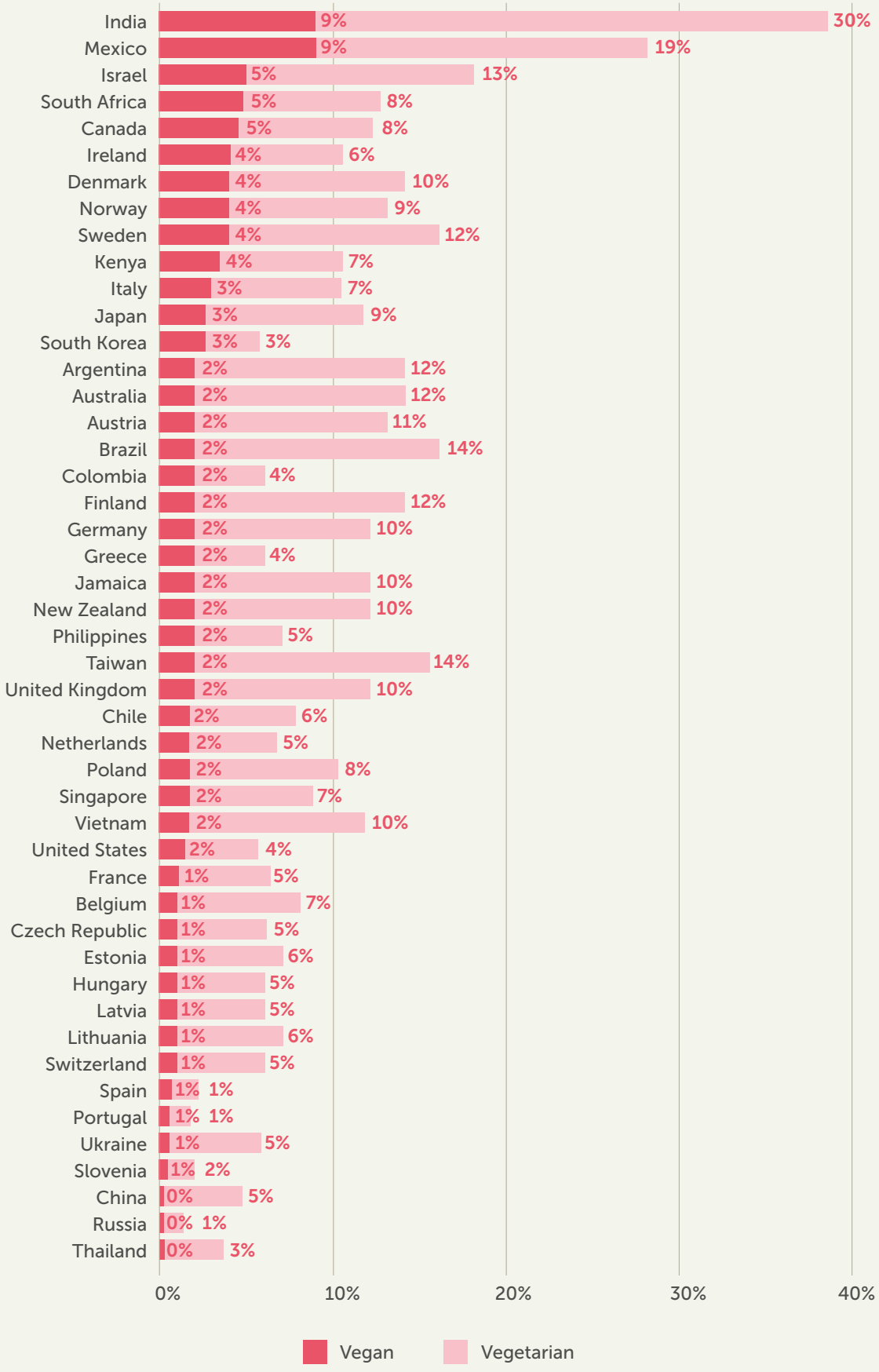
This report presents a condensed snapshot of our findings. Our aim is to provide readers with a deeper understanding of the global growth of veganism. For those seeking more detailed insights into any of our 21 countries of interest, we also offer infographics with sources for further reading. These resources are designed to help both local and international audiences to understand how veganism integrates into each country, including the influence of the country's social context (encompassing cultural, historical, political, religious, geographical, economic and linguistic factors).

2. VEGAN DIETS

A clarifying disclaimer: while for ease of reference we refer to veganism here as a dietary category, veganism is, in fact, a wider philosophy and lifestyle that seeks to avoid animal exploitation and cruelty in all forms, as far as is possible and practicable. A full definition of veganism is available from The Vegan Society (2025) **here**.

Perhaps the most overt way of assessing veganism's popularity in a given country is to record the percentage of the population that identifies as vegan. As such, we began our investigations by collecting data on rates of veganism around the world. These results are presented in the following tables, sourced from the **World Population Review** (2025), who themselves collated the data from various sources. The values for **Kenya** and **South Africa**, however, come from our own original polling. All corresponding surveys tend to have relatively small sample sizes. Moreover, the surveys do not use the same standard language nor methods, making direct comparisons less reliable. We advise advocates to use these data with caution.

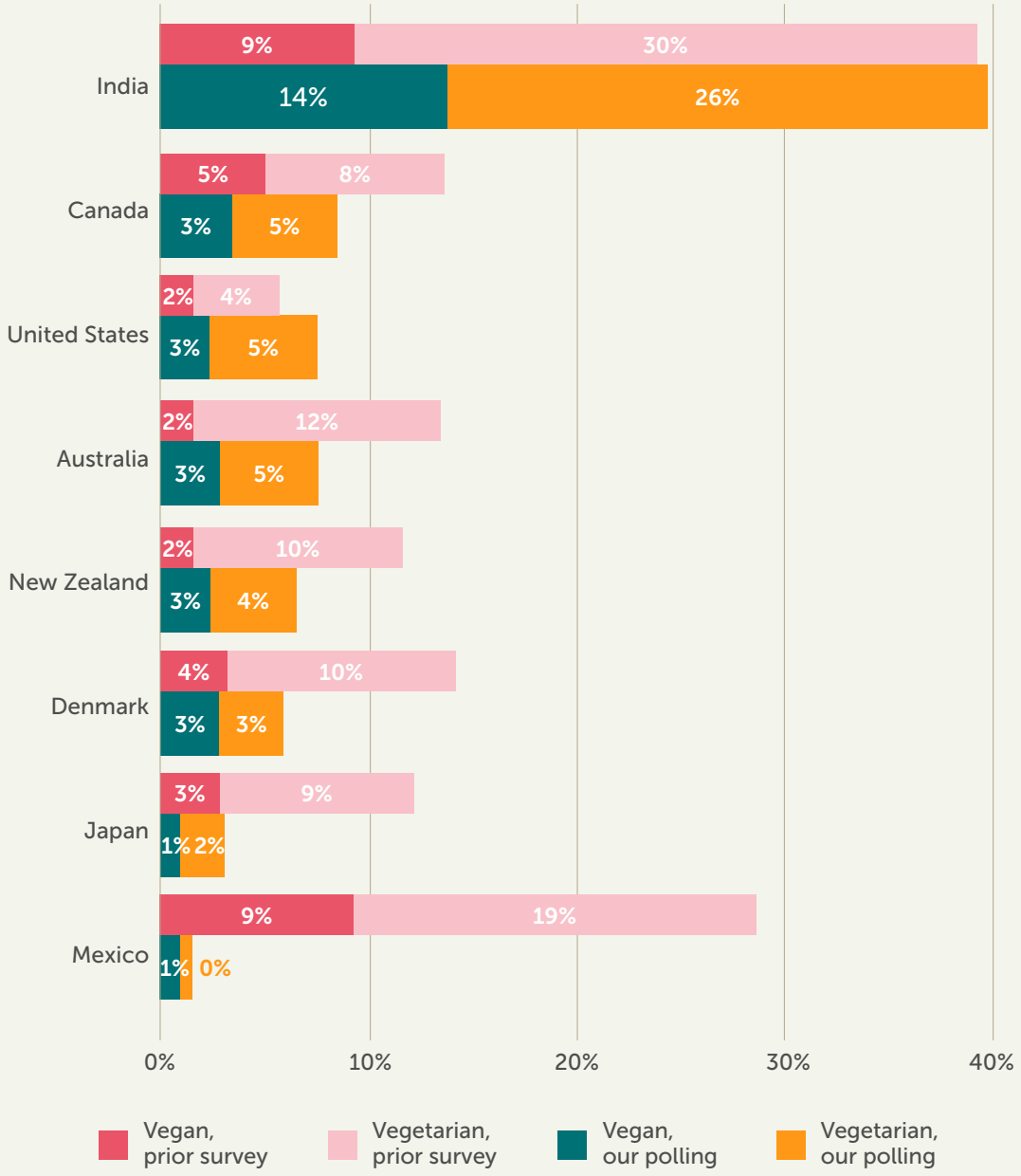
Rates of veganism across countries



Source: World Population Review

Given the small sample sizes, including in our own polling, there are significant margins of error and we encourage readers to interpret the given values with caution. In fact, we conducted our own polling across 10 countries and the rates of veganism that we found did not necessarily line up with the rates we had already collected from the World Population Review (2025) data.

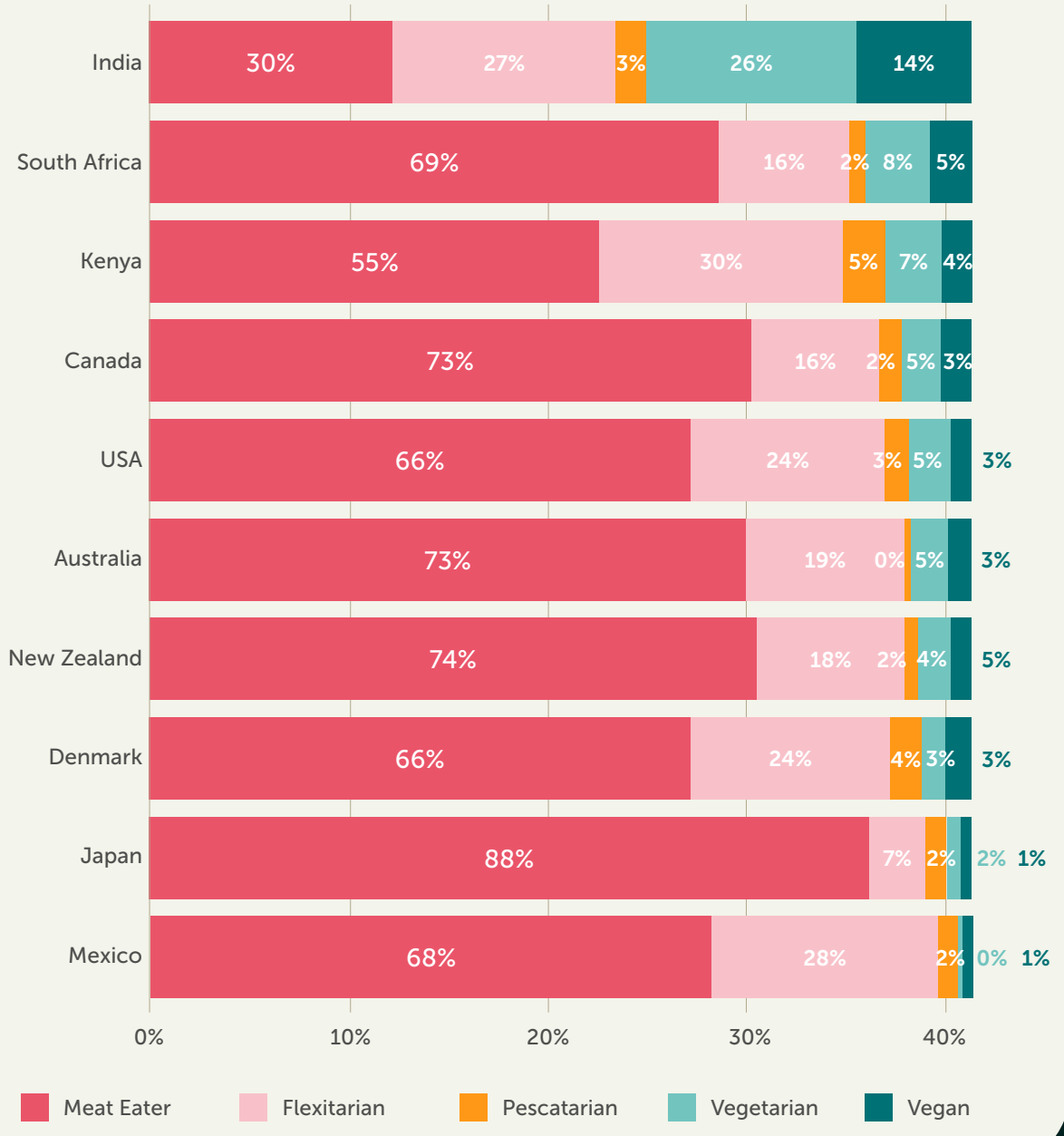
Rates of veganism: our polling vs previous surveys



Note: Though polled, **Kenya** and **South Africa** are excluded from this graph, as World Population Review did not have previous survey data to compare against.

The full diet breakdown for each of our 10 polled countries includes not just rates of veganism and vegetarianism, but also the rates of adhering to meat-eating, flexitarian and pescatarian diets.

Diet breakdown by surveyed countries



From these investigations, three interesting cases became clear to us.

1 **Mexico** is an interesting case in our polling, with only 1% of respondents claiming a vegan diet. This finding contradicts widely publicised research showing that **9% of Mexicans are vegan and a further 19% are vegetarian** (NIQ, 2016). In fact, we recorded no vegetarians at all in our own survey. Other recent polling, however, shows much more subdued results, with **2% of Mexicans following a vegan diet** (Statista, 2024). Our findings more closely reflect these results, adding evidence that the 9% finding may have been inflated. To form stronger conclusions about the veganism rate, a larger sample representative across age, gender and region would be ideal (noting that such a sample should deliberately include non-internet-based polling to account for residents without internet access).

2 **India** is a striking exception to the overall dietary pattern, with a quarter of respondents claiming to be vegetarian and a sizeable proportion (14%) claiming to be vegan. In contrast with every other country polled, meat-eaters do not make up the majority in **India**.

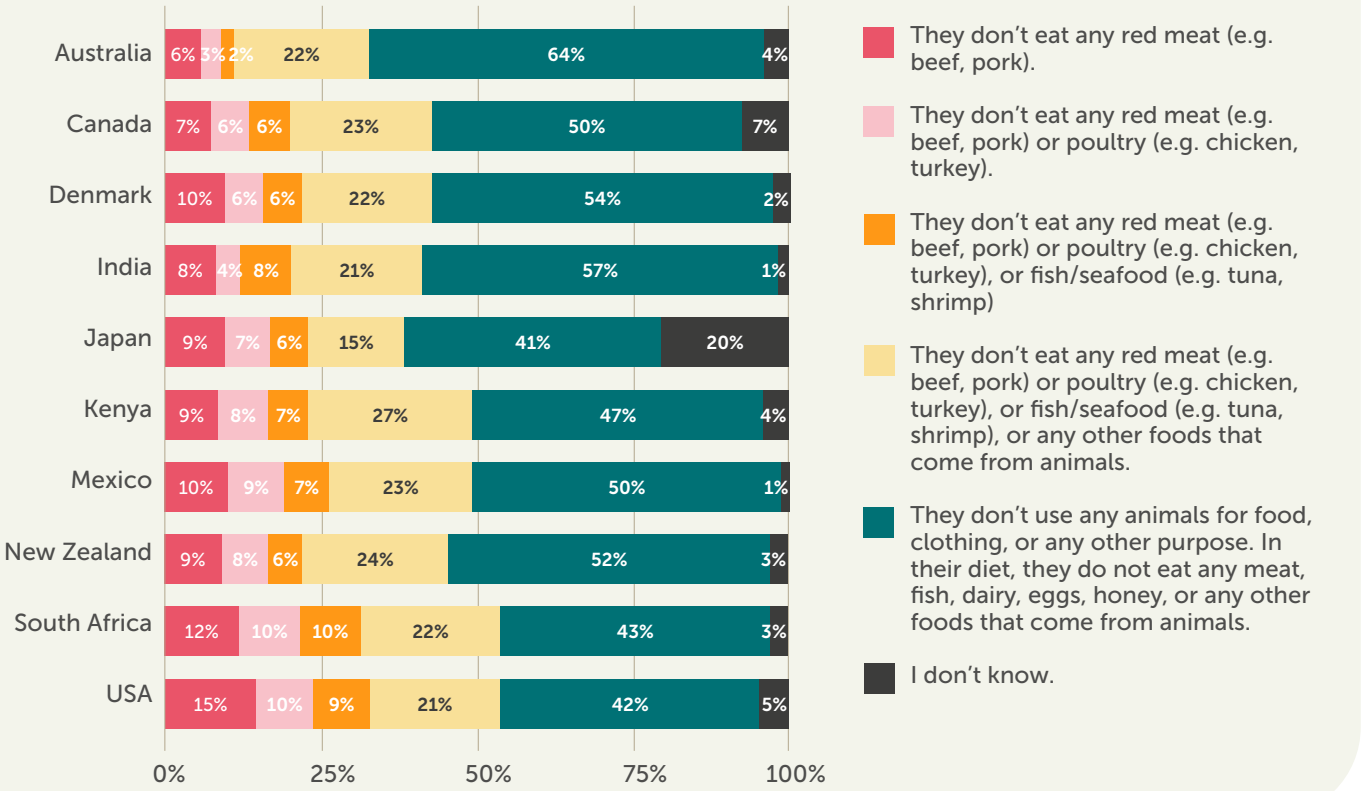
3 Interestingly, flexitarianism showed itself to be very common across nearly every country sample, with 16–30% of respondents reporting a flexitarian diet. This could indicate interest in a reduction in the consumption of animal products, if not 100% elimination. **Japan** was an exception to this trend, however, with only 7% of respondents reporting a flexitarian diet. Importantly, we cannot attribute this finding to unfamiliarity with the term 'flexitarian' (フレキシタリアン in Japanese) because descriptions for each diet were provided in the survey. It is more likely that flexitarianism simply does not yet have traction in **Japan**.

3. UNDERSTANDING OF VEGANISM

We investigated what people understand 'vegan' to mean. With the term being coined only a few decades ago, we were curious to see the geographical reach of veganism and were especially interested in the distinction between veganism as a diet and veganism as a lifestyle.

Across every polled country, the most commonly selected answer was "Vegans don't use animals for food, clothing, or any other purpose. In their diet, they do not eat any meat, fish, dairy, eggs, honey, or any other foods derived from animals". This finding indicates a relatively widespread understanding that veganism is more than a dietary habit.

What does it mean to you if someone is "vegan"?



4. HOW 'VEGAN' IS TRANSLATED

How do people around the world actually say 'vegan'? The vocabulary of 'vegan' is crucial, for everything from ordering at a restaurant to discussing animal rights. Without a common understanding, much can be lost in translation. We investigated how 'vegan' (noun form, e.g. "She is a vegan") is translated across languages. Data was taken from Reddit's r/vegan thread ***Vegan in every language??*** (Reddit, 2025), **V-Cards** (maxlearning.net, 2025) and from members of the **Hive** (2025) animal advocacy community hosted on Slack. Some language gaps remain and future research may also seek to explore how different grammatical forms are translated (e.g. 'vegan' as an adjective).

Some interesting findings include the following.

- China has myriad translations for "vegan". Arguably, the most common term is 纯素食者 ('a pure vegetarian'/'a pure vegetable-ist'). This term distinguishes vegans from vegetarians with the character 纯 ('pure'). This character is simply removed to write 'vegetarian'.
- However, the term 素食者 (vegetarian) is commonly used to indicate vegan and vegetarian alike, with no distinction between the two. Advocates should be aware of this linguistic quirk as it is likely to lead to confusion.
- Two other terms, 净素 (jìng sù) and 纯净素 (chún jìng sù), can also refer to veganism, but these are deeply tied to Buddhism, translating as 'pure Buddhist vegetarian/vegan'. These terms denote additional restrictions that fall outside the scope of Western conceptions of veganism. A 'pure Buddhist vegetarian' will likely also exclude the 'five pungent spices' (garlic, onions, chives, leeks, asafoetida) and alcohol from their diet.
- Many languages do not have their own terms for 'vegan'. They simply adopt the English term into their language directly or make slight modifications to align with local linguistic conventions. For example, Estonian uses "vegan" directly, and Portuguese uses the slightly altered vegano (masculine form) / vegana (feminine form).
- Similar to the previous point, languages that use non-Roman alphabets may also simply transliterate the term "vegan" into their own script. Greek, for example, uses the term βίγκαν (pronounced 'vēgən).
- Alternative terms to vegan, at least in the context of diet, appear to exist in other languages as well. French, for example, uses the term *végétalien*, which is akin to 'plant-based'. However, we were unable to truly dive into this aspect and encourage other advocates to explore this topic.
- Alternative terms to 'vegan' could be useful in certain contexts.

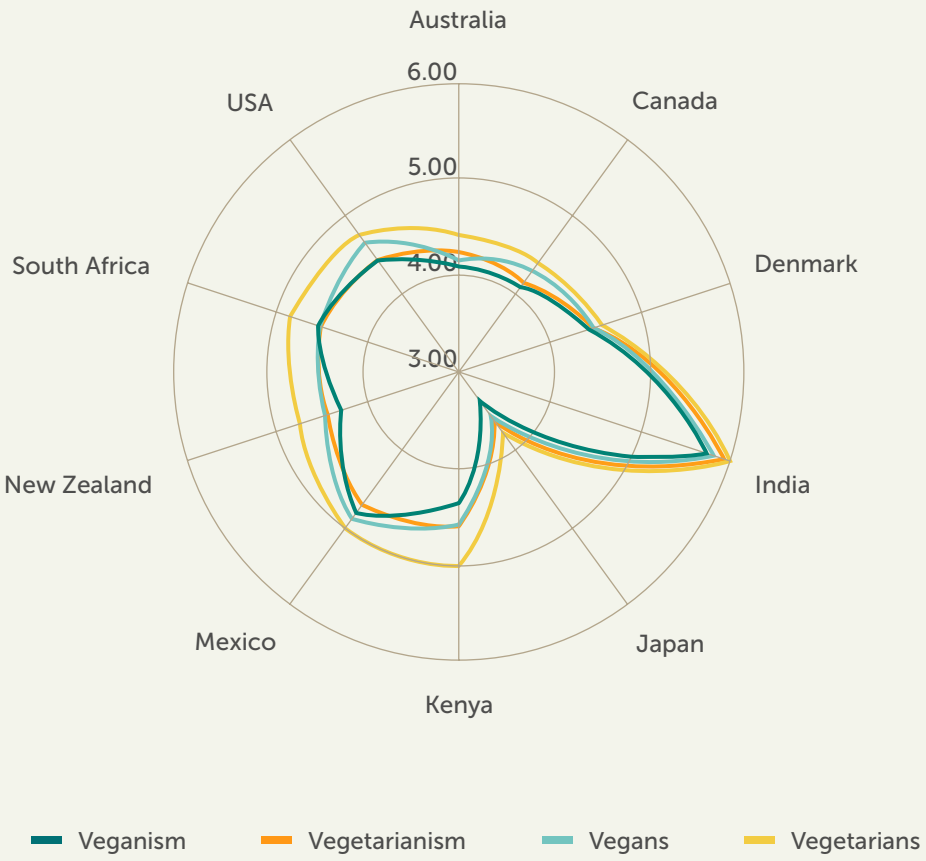
5. SENTIMENT TOWARD VEG*NISM

We measured sentiment towards the lifestyles of veganism and vegetarianism as well as towards vegans and vegetarians themselves. Respondents could report their sentiment from 1 (very negatively) to 7 (very positively). The results of all the questions are presented in the following radar plot.

This radar plot represents the average positivity of sentiment towards veganism, vegetarianism, vegans and vegetarians in the countries we surveyed. The outer circles represent more favourable sentiment. Several key trends are clearly identifiable.

- We recorded the most positive perceptions in **India** and the most negative perceptions in **Japan**. This is in line with the diets observed in each of these regions.
- We recorded slightly more positive perceptions of vegetarians compared with vegans (dark orange versus green) and of vegetarianism compared with veganism (light orange versus light teal). However, these differences tended to be very small.
- On average, most of the responses were slightly positive (greater than 4.00, the neutral point).
- **Japan**, however, consistently showed the least favourable sentiment towards veg*nism and veg*ns, scoring slightly negatively.
- **India**, by contrast, consistently showed the most positive sentiment. This aligns with India's high proportion of both vegetarians and vegans. Moreover, it may indirectly reflect the entrenched caste system because vegetarianism has historically been associated with the Brahmin and merchant castes, considered 'higher' and 'purer', and thus more venerated. For a fuller discussion of this, see Section 10.5.1.

Perceptions of vegetarianism and veganism, as well as vegetarians and vegans

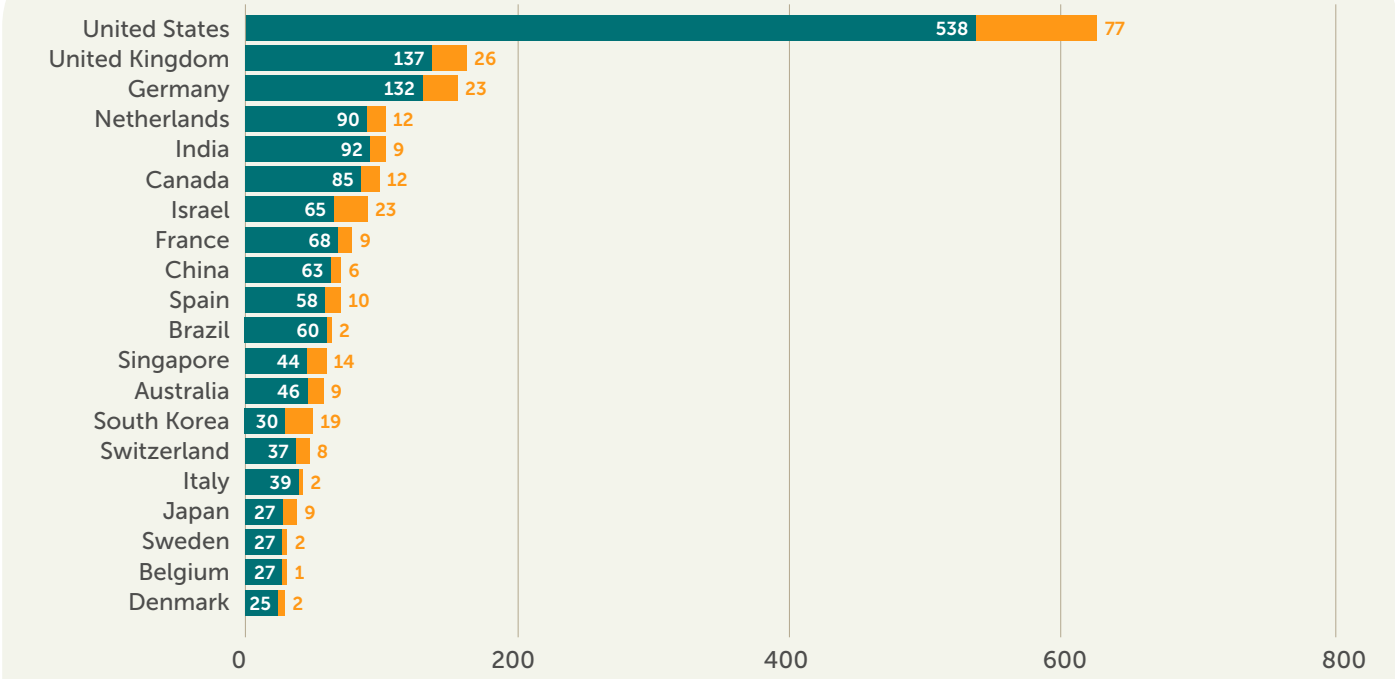


6. VEGAN BUSINESSES

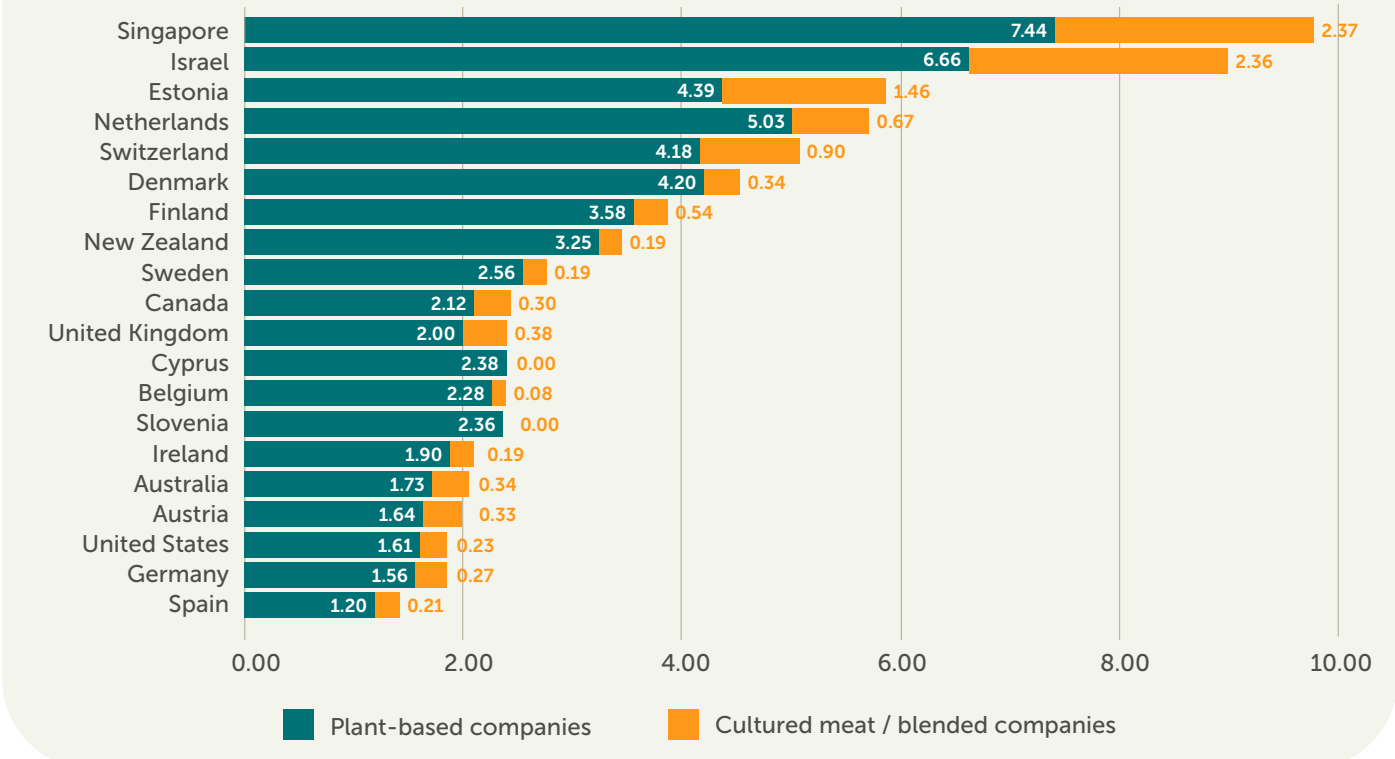
6.1. Animal product alternative companies

We recorded the total number of animal product alternative (APA) companies within each country, including companies producing plant-based alternatives to animal-based foods, companies producing cultivated (i.e. cultured) meat and companies producing blended proteins (i.e. products that combine animal and plant proteins) (Protein Directory, 2025; Good Food Institute 2025).

Top 20 countries: animal product alternative companies per country



Top 20 countries: animal product alternative companies per country per million people



Top 20 countries: animal product alternative companies per country. Source: Protein Directory, 2025; Good Food Institute 2025.
Top 20 countries: animal product alternative companies per country per million people. Source: Protein Directory, 2025; Good Food Institute 2025 **Note:** Countries with a population of less than one million were excluded from the per capita calculations.

• We differentiate between APA companies that produce cultivated meat or blended meat products (represented in aggregate, indicated in orange) and those that are plant- or fermentation-based (represented in aggregate, indicated in teal) – that is, we differentiate between products considered vegan and those that The Vegan Society does not consider to be vegan.[1] Countries are listed in order according to the total number of companies, regardless of the type of product.

• **Singapore**, **Israel**, and the **Netherlands** are among the countries with the highest number of APA companies per million people, which agrees with these countries' status as global leaders in alternative proteins, especially cultivated meat. Interestingly, the Sentience Institute predicted in 2017 that each of these countries, among others, would be some of **the earliest adopters of cultivated meat** (Mohorčich, 2017) due to their heavy reliance on food imports (see Section 7.3), national strengths of science and engineering and, for some countries, a centralised, authoritarian and technocratic government. The Sentience Institute dedicated particular attention to **Singapore** as a case study, which subsequently became the first country to approve and sell cultivated meat, three years later. as a case study, a country that, three years later, became the first to approve and sell cultivated meat. Other countries (**Slovenia**, **Ireland**, **South Korea** and **China**) were also noted, all of which appear in the top 20 countries by our count (either absolute or per capita values for the number of APA companies).

• Notably, not all of the Sentience Institute's predictions have, as yet, come to fruition. According to their calculations, **Hong Kong**, the **United Arab Emirates**, **Japan**, **Algeria**, **Qatar**, **Lebanon** and **Taiwan** are all positioned to be early adopters of cultivated meat, yet this is not presently the case. We extend their analysis to say that these countries are probably well-positioned to produce APAs in general, not just cultivated meat. Time will tell if these conditions for APAs actually facilitate new business or if these remain lost opportunities.

• **Estonia** is another leader if we consider the high per capita presence of APA companies. However, in reality, Estonia has relatively few APA companies compared with other countries. Their high per capita ranking is a product of their small population.

• Despite having the highest number of APA companies overall by a wide margin (615), the **USA** is ranked at 18 when considering the number of companies per capita.

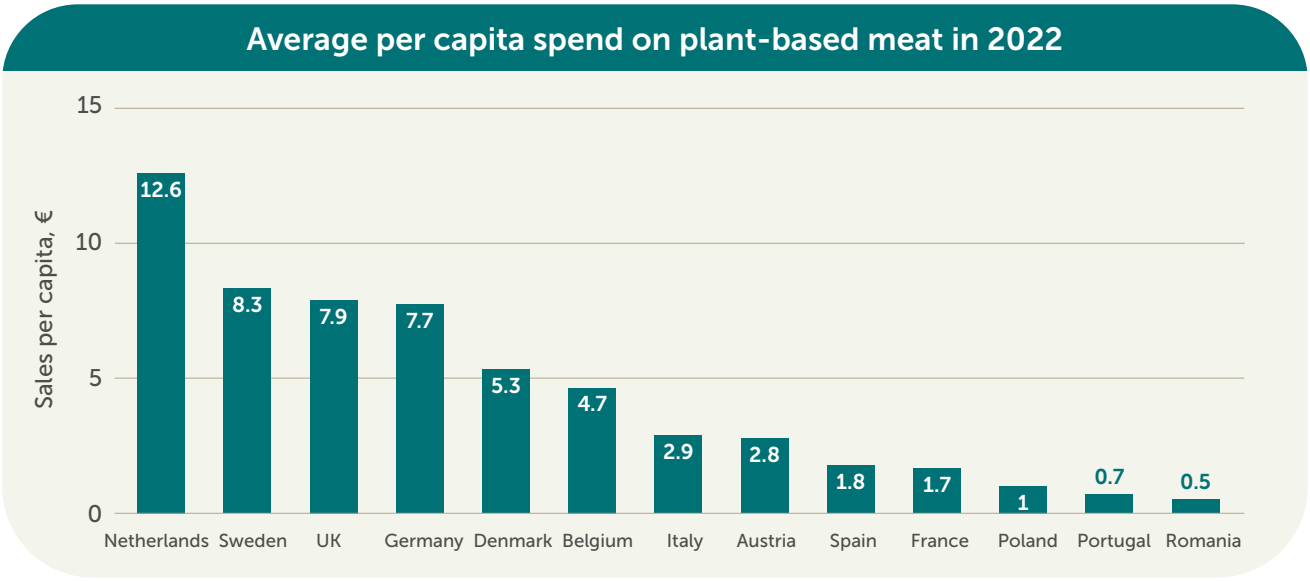
• The **UK** has the highest number of APA companies in Europe, at 163, followed by **Germany** (155) and the **Netherlands** (102).

• There is also a high number of companies in **India** (101), **Canada** (97), **Israel** (88), **France** (77) and **China** (69), all in our top 10 countries for APA companies.

• Some evidence indicates that a greater number of APA companies coincides with a greater consumption of APAs. This suggests that these APA-friendly countries are not merely countries with good conditions to do business (e.g. low tax rates, large/diverse market access), although the business environment is indeed a factor. This is certainly the case for **Germany**, the **UK** and the **Netherlands**, which are the top European countries by absolute number of APA companies and which also have some of the **highest per capita sales of plant-based meat** (Good Food Institute, 2023).

• However, it is also evident that a greater presence of APA companies does not necessarily directly correspond with a lower consumption of animal products. **Israel**, has the seventh highest number of APA companies in the world and the second most per capita. In spite of this, **Israel** is the highest poultry consumer per capita and the fourth highest consumer of beef (see Section 7.2).

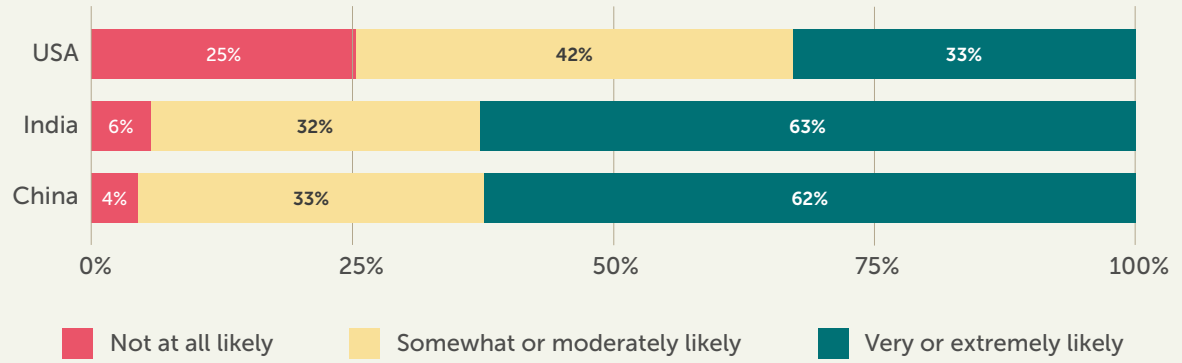
• Some countries could be big manufacturers and exporters of APAs even if their domestic consumption is relatively modest. For example, the **USA** has the highest number of APA companies by far but is now experiencing a slowdown in domestic demand. Nevertheless, opportunities for export remain high: **this 2019 survey** (Bryant et al, 2019) found that, compared with the **USA**, consumers in **India** and **China** were almost twice as likely to report that they are 'very or extremely likely' to purchase plant-based meat.



Average per capita spend on plant-based meat in 2022. Protein Directory, 2025; Good Food Institute 2025.per capita calculations.

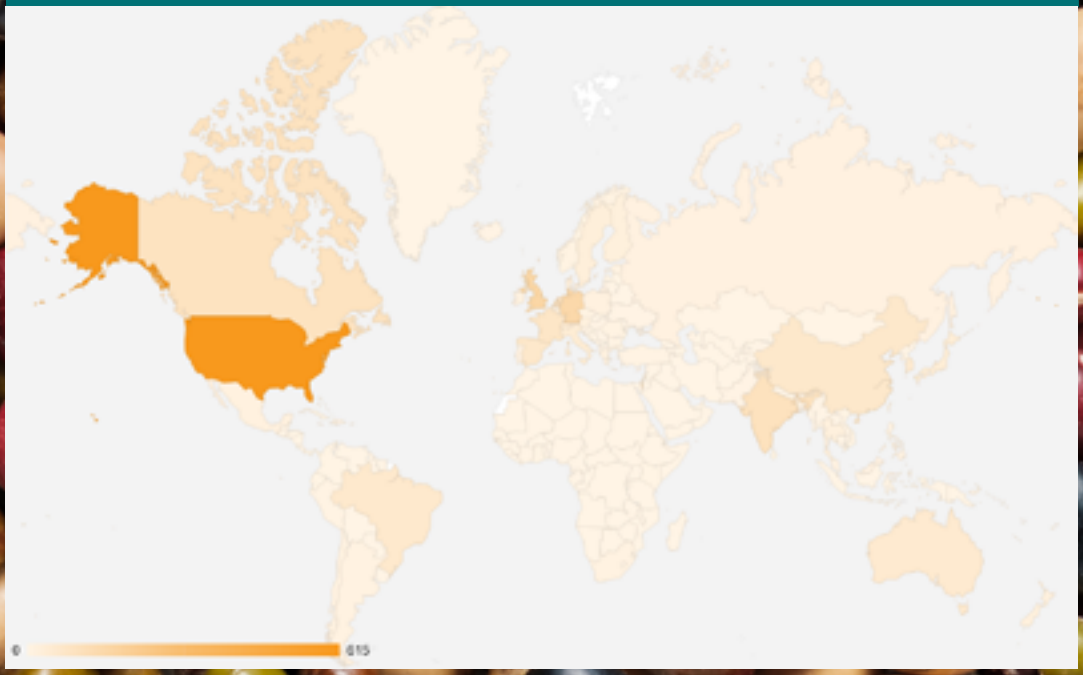
[1] The Vegan Society does not currently consider cultivated meat to be vegan.

Likelihood of purchasing plant-based meat in the US, India, and China



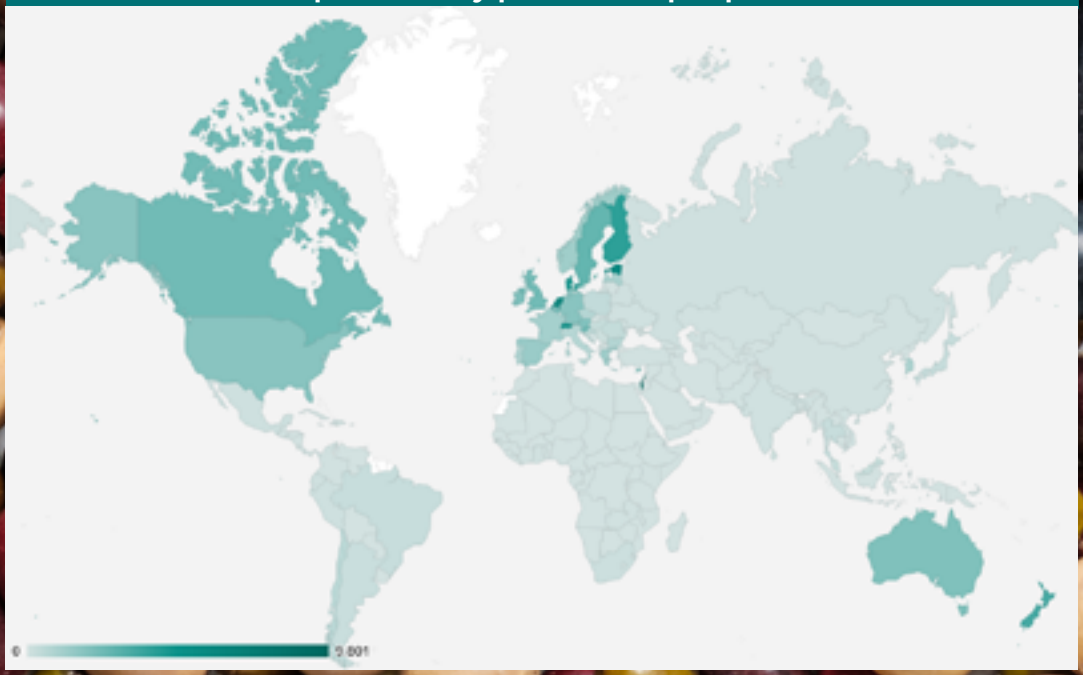
Source: Bryant et al, 2019

Number of animal product alternative companies per country



Number of Animal Product Alternative Companies Per Country. Protein Directory, 2025; Good Food Institute 2025

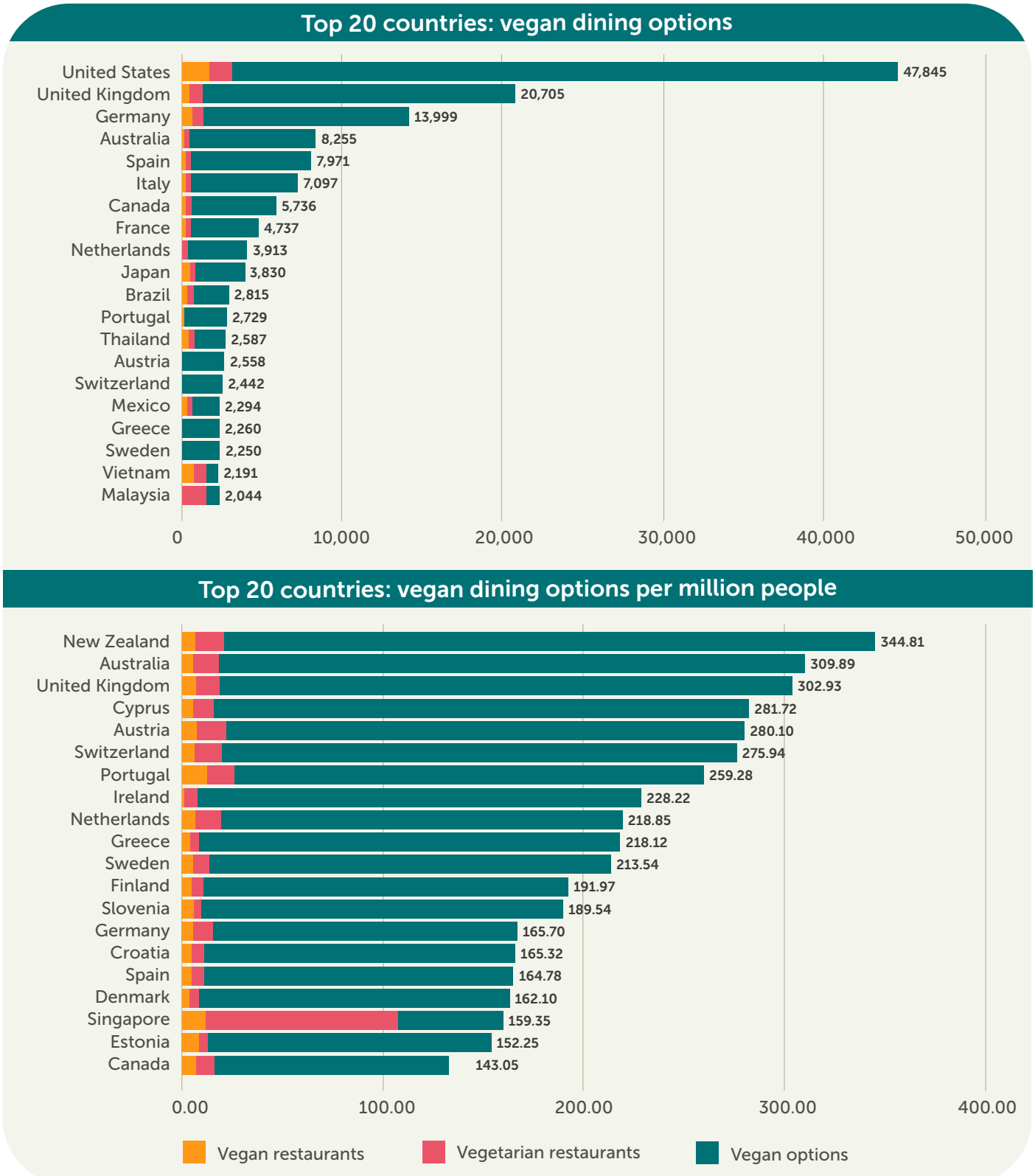
Number of animal product alternative companies per country per million people



Number of Animal Product Alternative Companies Per Country Per Million People. Source: Protein Directory, 2025; Good Food Institute 2025

6.2. Vegan Restaurants

The following figures showcase the number of vegan dining options offered across countries, including non-vegan/non-vegetarian (non-veg*n) restaurants that offer at least one vegan meal option, vegetarian restaurants that offer at least one vegan meal option and fully vegan restaurants. The results are presented as both raw numbers and per capita (per million people) calculations.



Source: HappyCow (2025)

• We sourced these numbers from **HappyCow** (2025), a website and app used to locate vegan food and vegan shops. An important caveat to these data is that HappyCow is community-powered, with users logging the restaurants in their area. While usually a strength, this approach does present a potential notable issue. Countries with high rates of vegan offerings may be genuine vegan hotspots. Conversely, they may actually be some of the more difficult countries for vegans, with users logging every possible vegan option in the area to help fellow users locate hard-to-find vegan food. By contrast, users in countries with readily available vegan food may not feel driven to log every restaurant.

• As expected, there are many more vegan options within non-veg*n restaurants than there are purely veg*n restaurants. The number of vegan options showcases (1) how accommodating each country is to vegan diners and/or (2) how popular plant-based eating is when dining out, even if vegan restaurants do not have a strong presence.

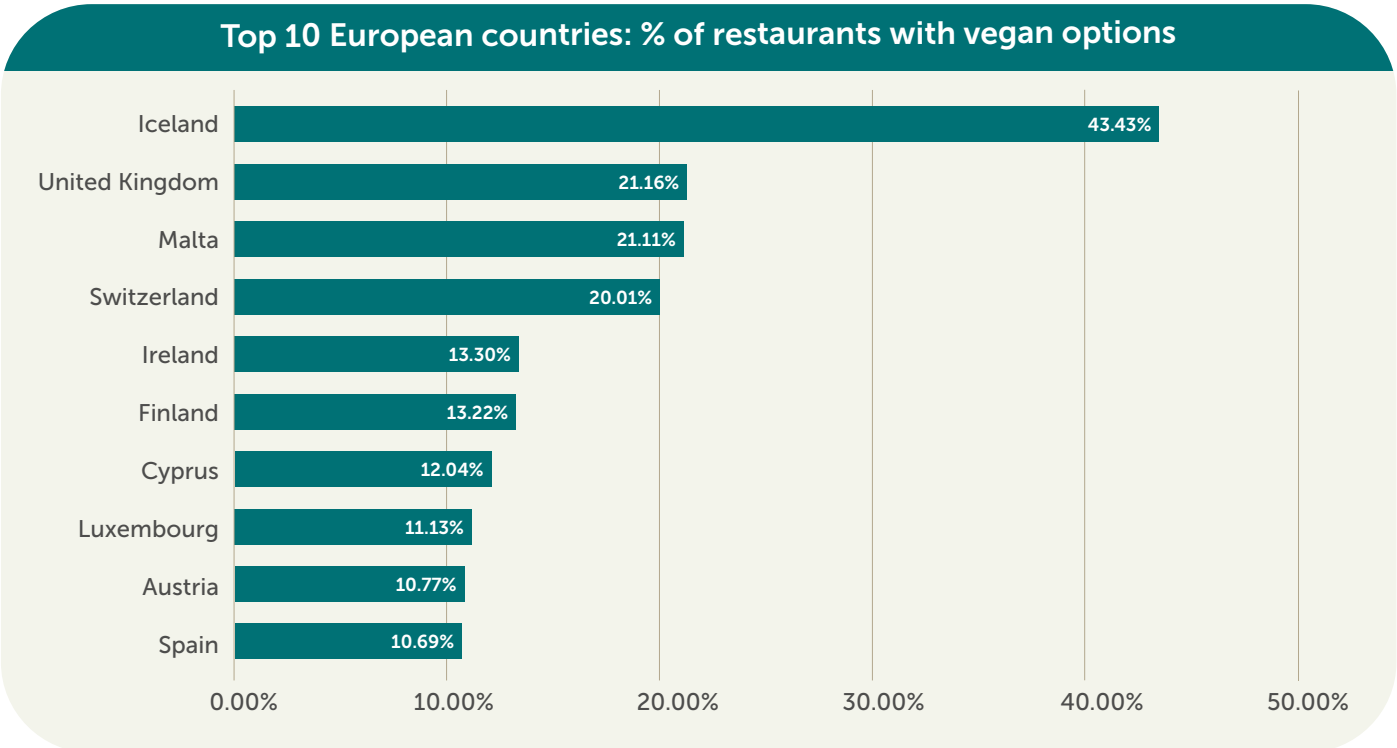
• In raw numbers, **Vietnam** and **Malaysia** are an exception to this tendency. **Vietnam** has roughly equal numbers of vegan restaurants, vegetarian restaurants with vegan options, and non-veg*n restaurants with vegan offerings. The score for **Malaysia** is dominated by the presence of vegetarian restaurants rather than vegan offerings at non-veg*n restaurants, with roughly 2.4× more dedicated vegetarian restaurants than non-veg*n restaurants with veg*n food.

• Per capita, **Singapore** is a clear exception, with nearly twice as many dedicated vegetarian restaurants (with vegan offerings) than non-veg*n restaurants with vegan offerings.

• **Vietnam**, **Malaysia** and **Singapore** may be exceptions because of their high rate of Buddhism (more on this later in the report). The high number of vegetarian restaurants in **Singapore** also coincides with their high number of APA companies (Section 6.1), suggesting a wider culture of vegetarian, and perhaps vegan, acceptance.

• Moreover, the high number of vegetarian restaurants in **Singapore** is due, in part, to its culture of 'hawker centres' – that is, large food halls with shared seating areas and many small food stalls. Food stalls within hawker centres are subject to relatively unique pressures, including **small stalls of around 10m²**, **restrictions on running multiple stalls** (Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment Singapore, 2021) and an abundance of competitors in close proximity, all of which pressure stalls towards a limited inventory, small menus and specialisation in niche dishes. Combining these hawker centre pressures with **a long history of vegetarian restaurants established by early Indian immigrants** (Biblioasia, 2013) and the tendency for **cultures with a lot of Chinese influence to observe vegetarianism on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar calendar** (Chen, Lin and Zeng, 2025) creates the conditions for **Singapore** to have the highest number of vegetarian restaurants per capita in the world.

It is important to put these numbers into the greater context of all restaurants. For example, these data indicate that the **UK** has one of the highest rates of vegan options, but it does not communicate how common vegan dining options are among all **UK** restaurants. The following figure (partially) addresses this data gap, showing which percentage of all restaurants carry vegan options. Unfortunately, only European countries are presented due to the availability of data.



Source: HappyCow (2025)

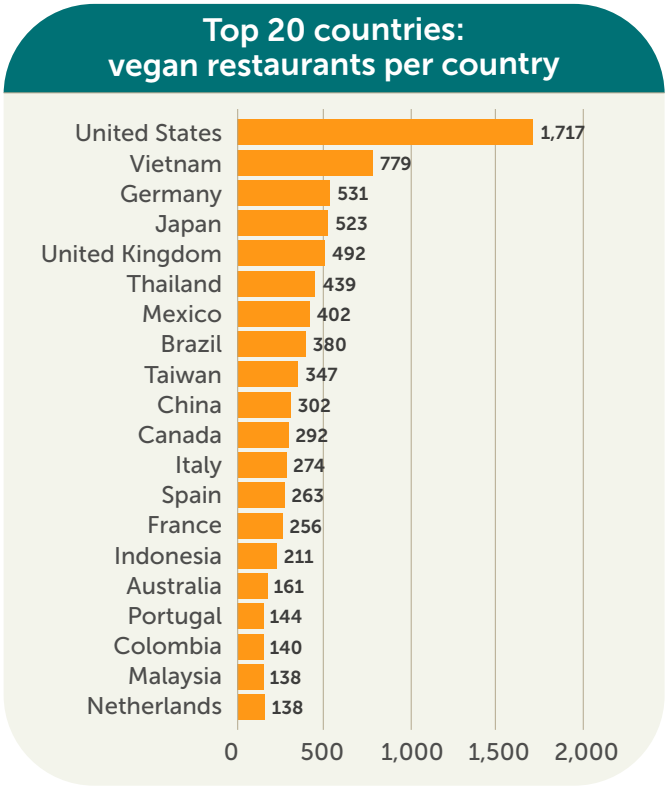
• These data reflect the percentage of all restaurants that have vegan dining options, including non-vegan and non-vegetarian restaurants that serve at least one vegan option, vegetarian restaurants that serve at least one vegan option and fully vegan restaurants.

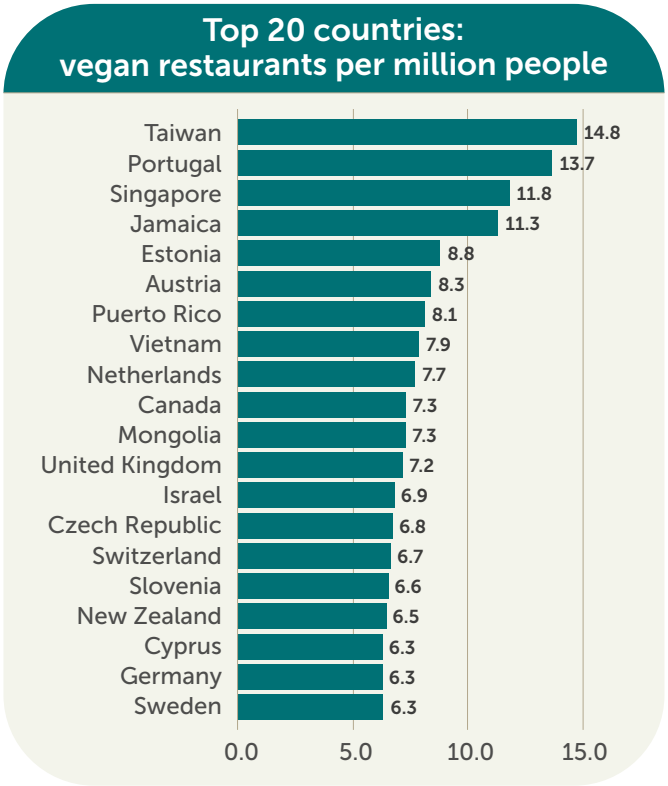
• **Iceland** leads Europe by a large margin, with 43% of all restaurants offering at least one vegan dish.

• It is unclear whether the unusually high rate of vegan offerings in **Iceland** coincides with a high proportion of vegans in the country because these data are not readily available. However, we can state confidently that these restaurant offerings do not translate into a lower consumption of meat and animal products. **Iceland** has one of the highest rates of consumption of meat and animal products of about 394 kg per capita per year, the same rate as the **USA**.[2]

• Dining in the **UK**, **Malta** and **Switzerland** also includes a relatively high percentage of vegan offerings, with 20–21% of restaurants serving at least one vegan dish.

The following figures focus on dedicated vegan restaurants, presenting raw (orange) and per capita (green) values.





Note: Countries with a population of less than one million were excluded from per capita calculations.

• The **USA** has the most vegan restaurants in the world by a wide margin (1717).

• However, when considering vegan restaurants per capita, the **USA** ranks much lower at 29.

• Perhaps surprisingly, many countries simultaneously have an extremely high rate of meat consumption and a large presence of vegan restaurants.

  • For example, **Portugal** has both the second greatest number of vegan restaurants per capita and the third highest fish/seafood consumption per capita in the world.

  • The **USA** is the third highest consumer of beef per capita yet has the most vegan restaurants of any country.

• In what is unlikely to be a coincidence, countries with large Buddhist populations show a strong standing in both the absolute number of vegan restaurants and the per capita values.

• **Vietnam** has the second largest number of vegan restaurants in the world (779).

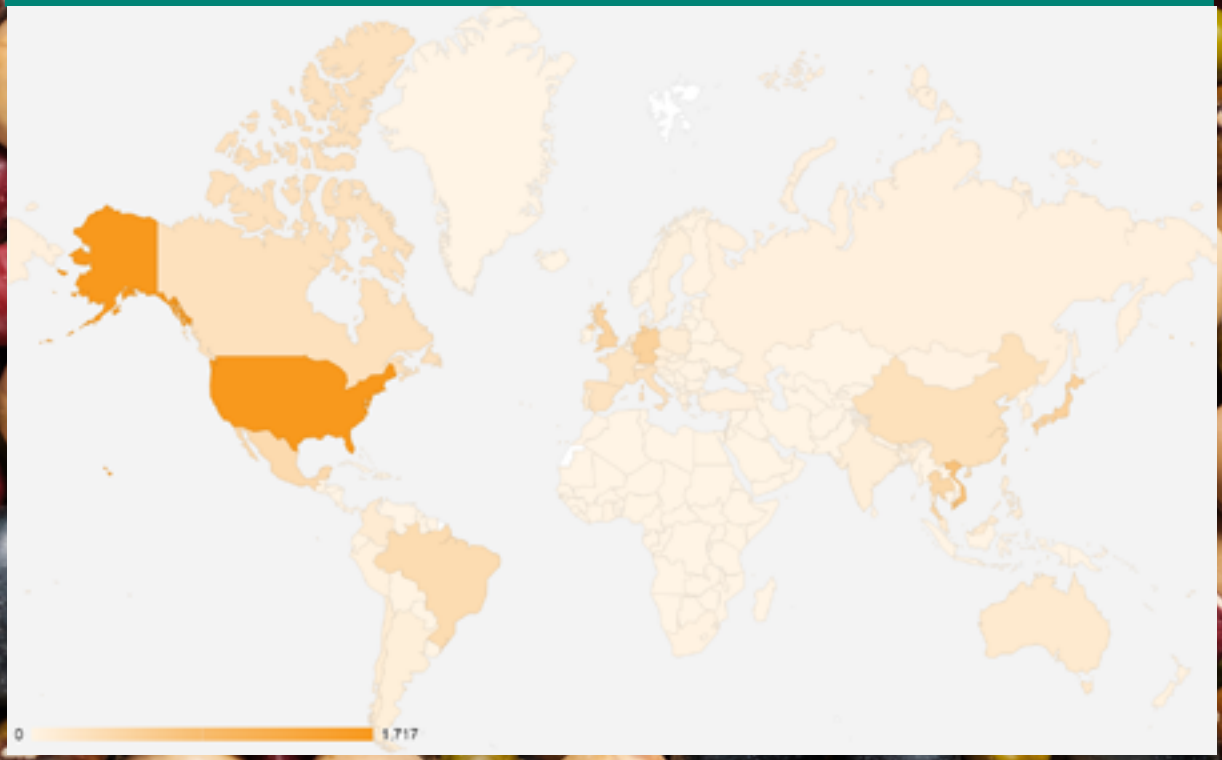
• **Japan** (523), **Thailand** (439), **Taiwan** (347), **China** (302) and **Indonesia** (211) are also prominent.

• Per million people, **Taiwan** has the most vegan restaurants (14.8) and **Singapore** the third most (11.8). **Mongolia** (7.3) also ranks highly at number 11.

• Mahayana Buddhism, as dominantly practiced in countries such as **China**, **Japan**, **Vietnam**, **Mongolia**, **Taiwan**, **Singapore** and **Indonesia**, is particularly friendly to veganism, as demonstrated in these figures. This school of Buddhism strongly discourages or outright prohibits meat consumption, whereas other forms of Buddhism are more permissive.

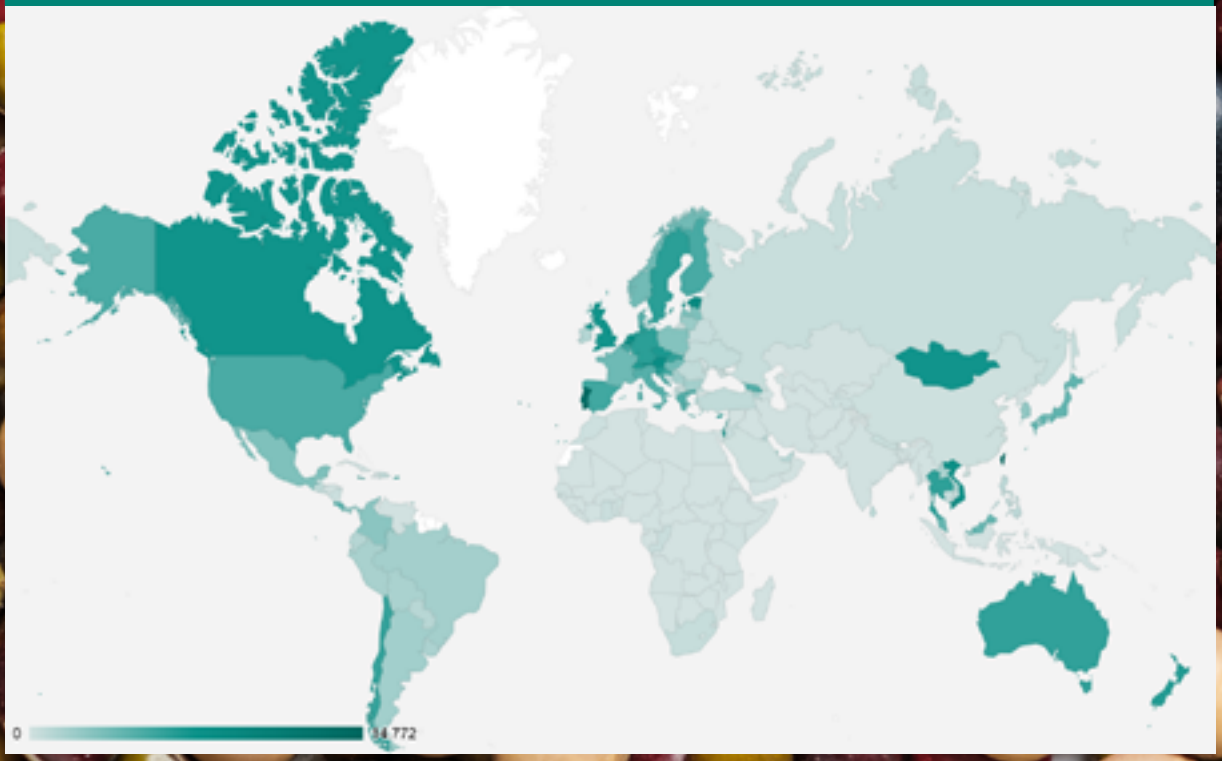
[2] Iceland is excluded from the analysis in Section 6.2 on account of it having a population of less than one million (only 393,600). As such, we do not report it in the top 20 countries for meat and animal product consumption per capita.

Number of vegan restaurants per country



Source: HappyCow 2025

Number of vegan restaurants per country per million people



Source: HappyCow 2025

By understanding how entrenched animal-based industries are within each country, advocates can create more strategic, mindful campaigns – especially policy-centred campaigns.

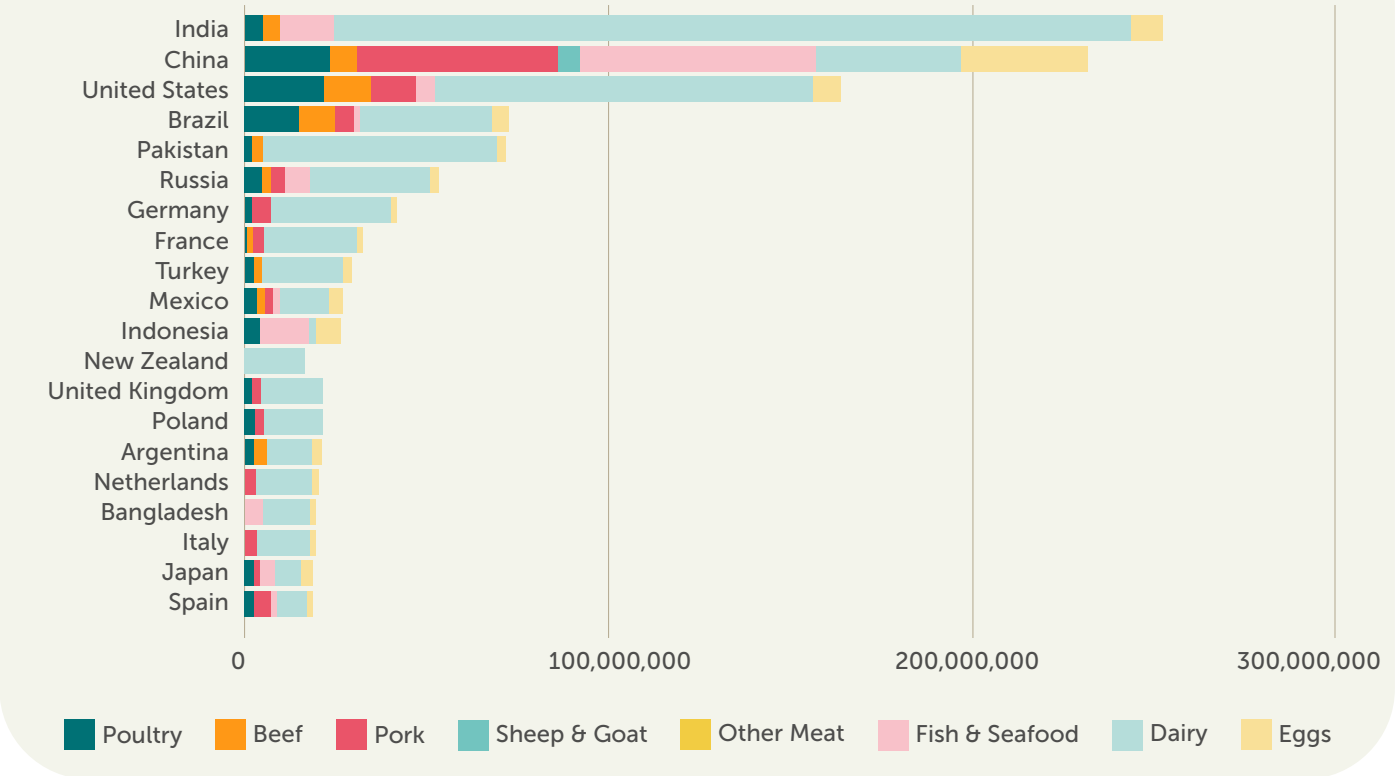
7. ANIMAL PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION AND TRADE

By understanding how entrenched animal-based industries are within each country, advocates can create more strategic, mindful campaigns, especially policy-centred campaigns. We present here data on **animal product consumption, production and import/export rates** (FOASTAT, 2023) . These sections should be considered as a whole because they are firmly linked.

7.1. Production

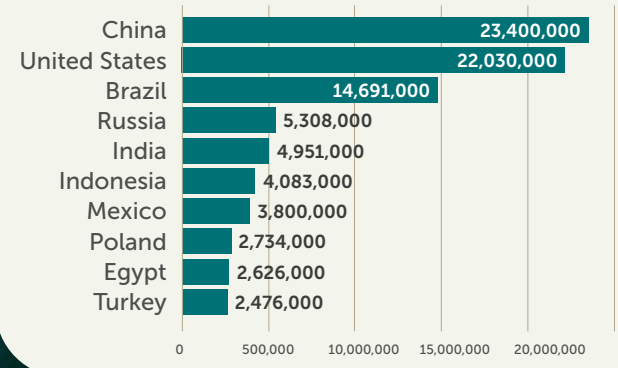
Rates of animal product production per country are represented in the following figures. First, we aggregate all animal product production to showcase the highest producing countries across all categories. The highest ranked countries in this figure are the primary sources of animal products, whether or not they actually consume the most animal products themselves. These countries are often also the greatest exporters of animal products (more on this in Section 7.3). In the following figures, animal products are broken down by individual product (e.g. poultry, beef, dairy), showing the leading countries in each animal product industry.

Top 20 countries: animal product production (tonnes)

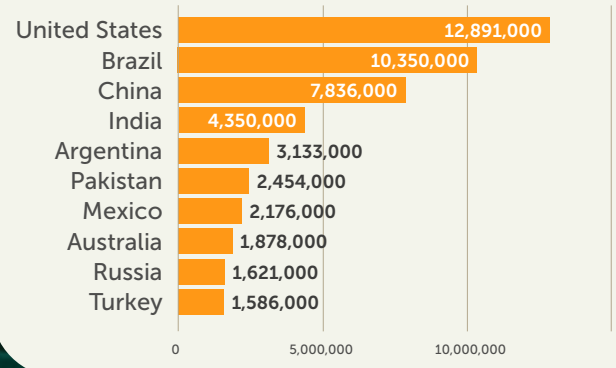


Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation United Nations (2022)

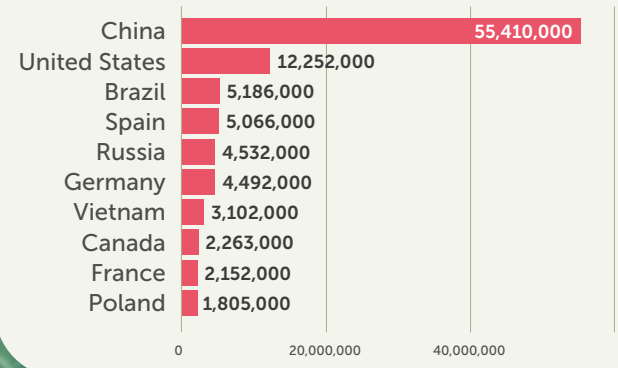
Top 10 countries: Poultry production (tonnes)



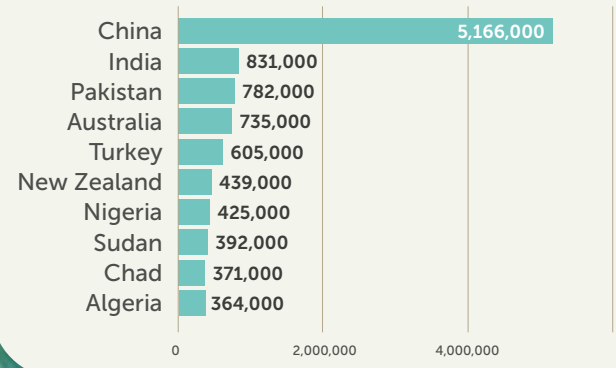
Top 10 countries: Beef production (tonnes)



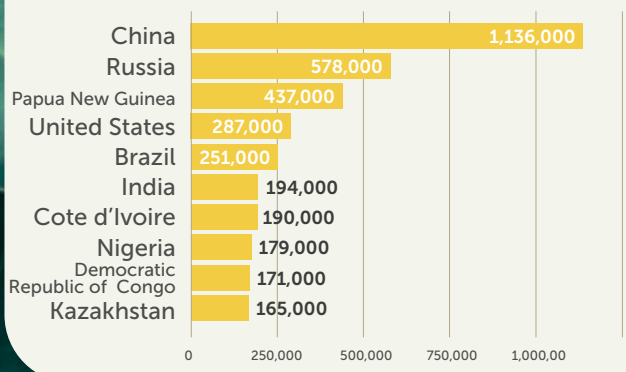
Top 10 countries: Pork production (tonnes)



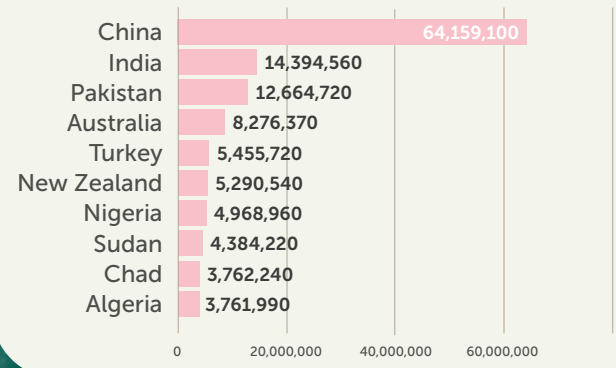
Top 10 countries: Sheep and goat production (tonnes)



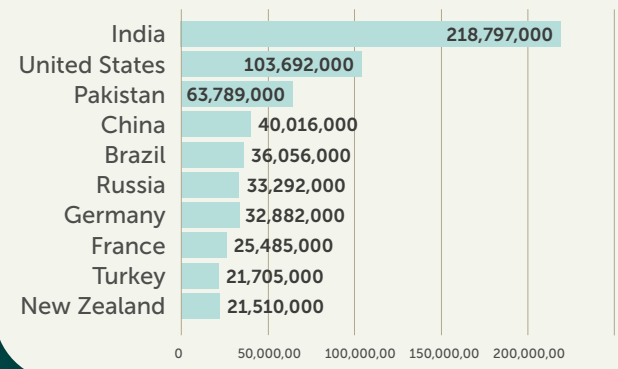
Top 10 countries: Other meat production (tonnes)



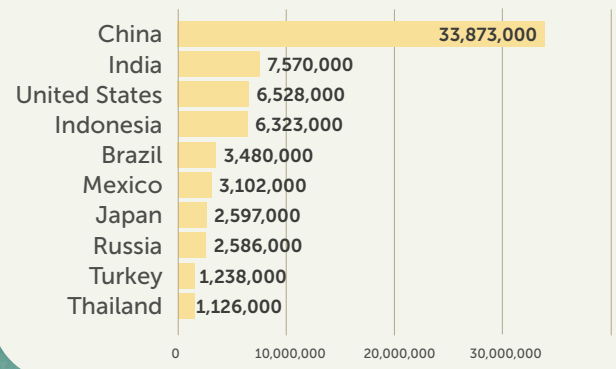
Top 10 countries: Fish and seafood production (tonnes)



Top 10 countries: Dairy production (tonnes)



Top 10 countries: Egg production (tonnes)



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation United Nations (2022)

• Each individual graph is presented on a different scale, which may disguise the stark differences between various products. If every product were presented on the same scale as dairy, for example, many of the bars would be nearly invisible because dairy production far surpasses the others in terms of tonnage.

• These charts only represent the weight of production and do not account for the number of animals behind each product. Smaller animals must be slaughtered in much greater numbers to produce the same amount of meat, a phenomenon commonly referred to as **the small body problem** (Bryant Research, 2024). For example, about 192 chickens must be slaughtered to produce the same amount of meat harvested from a single cow. Therefore, even if the tonnage of poultry and pork production, for instance, appears comparable, the numbers of animals farmed and slaughtered are very different.

• Many of the same countries are top producers across categories. **China**, for example, is the number one producer of poultry, pork, lamb and goat, other meat (e.g. game, camel, horse), fish and seafood, and eggs.

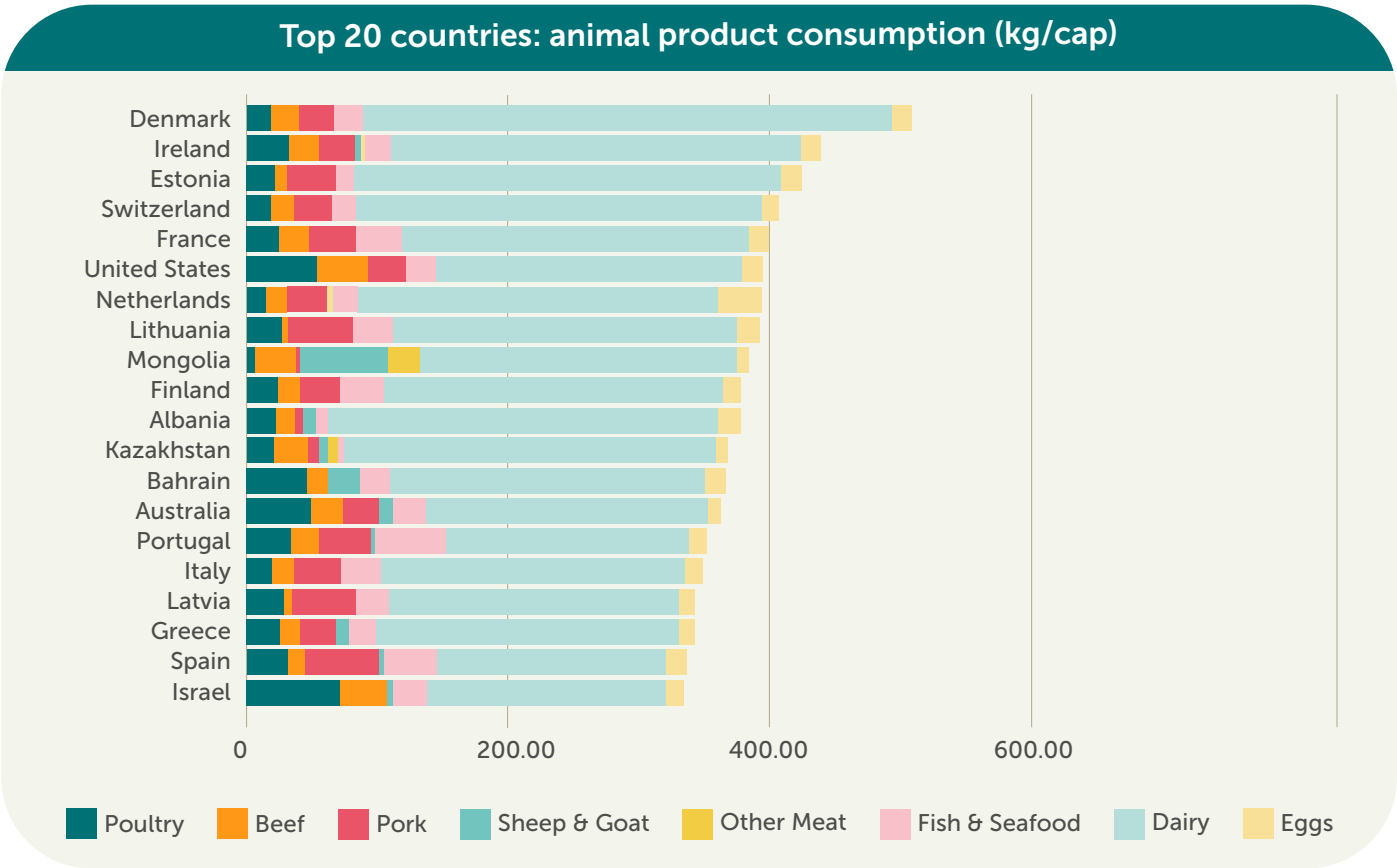
• The **USA**, **Brazil**, **India** and **Russia**, among other countries, also appear repeatedly in these lists. The **USA** is a particularly high producer and appears in the top three across five categories (poultry, beef, pork, dairy and eggs).

• For many products, a single country dominates production. In the case of pork production, **China** produces more than the next 19 largest producing countries combined. Similarly, for fish and seafood, **China** produces more than the following nine countries combined. **India** produces more than double the amount of dairy that the **USA** does (the next highest producer) and more than the **USA**, **Pakistan** and **China** combined.

• **India**, despite not having a dedicated beef industry, is the fourth highest producer of beef (as well as the fourth greatest exporter of beef). While seemingly nonsensical, this dynamic largely exists because of India's extremely prolific dairy industry. The dairy and beef industries are deeply intertwined. Male calves and 'spent' dairy bovines (i.e. bovines that no longer produce sufficient milk) have no utility for the dairy industry, so are slaughtered for beef. The term 'bovines' is used intentionally here because India's dairy industry is made up of cows and water buffalo. Water buffalo, however, dominate India's beef production and exports, given the differing sacred status between cows and buffalo. For a more detailed discussion of this, please see Section 10.5.1.

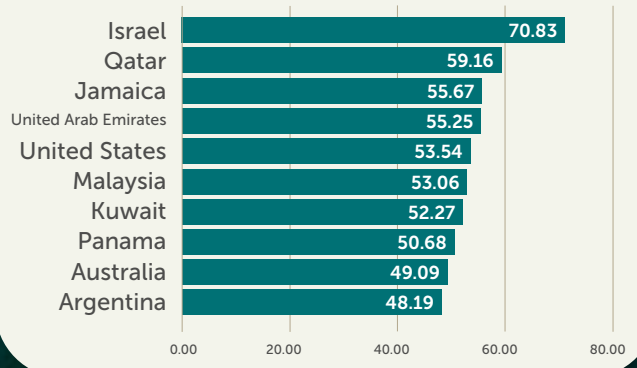
7.2. Consumption

This section covers the **rates of consumption of animal products per country** (FOASTAT, 2022) (per capita). Consumption across all categories is first presented in aggregate, followed by a product-by-product breakdown.

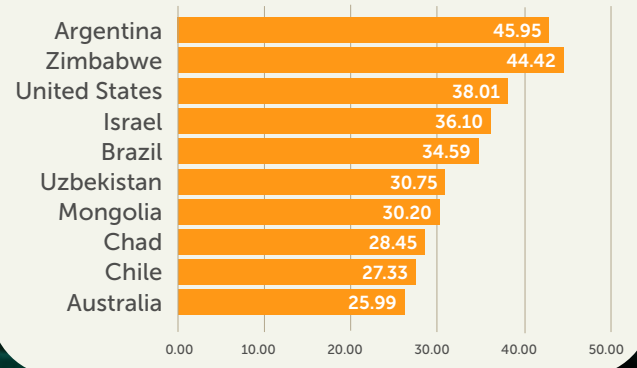


Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation United Nations (2022)

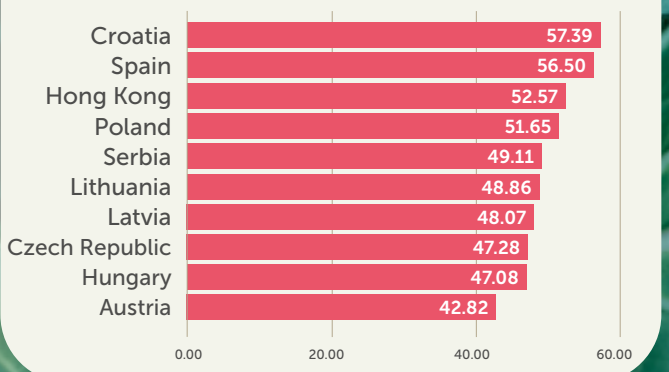
Top 10 countries: Poultry consumption (kg/cap)



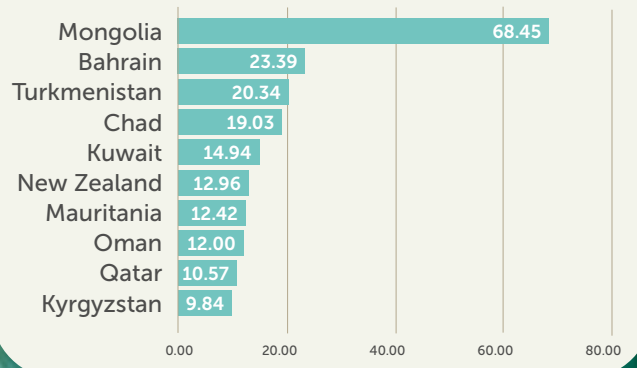
Top 10 countries: Beef consumption (kg/cap)



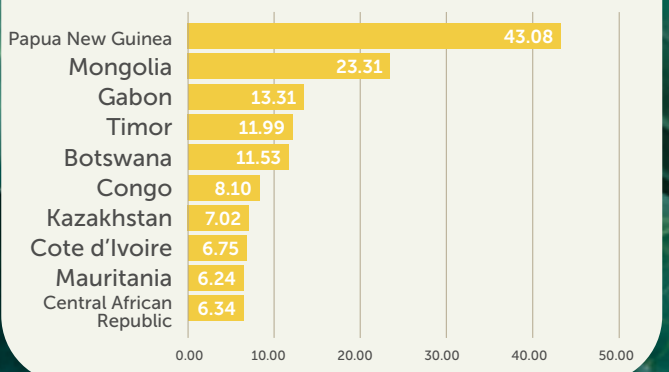
Top 10 countries: Pork consumption (kg/cap)



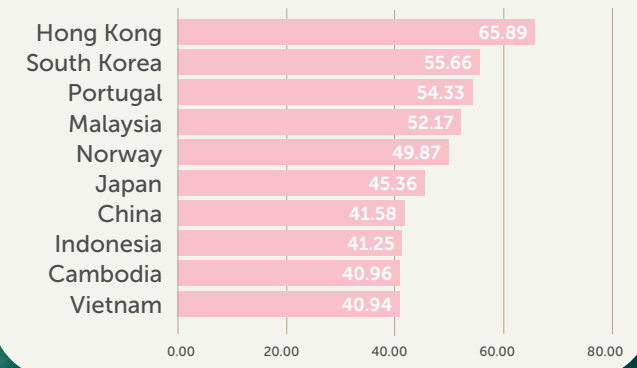
Top 10 countries: Sheep and goat consumption (kg/cap)



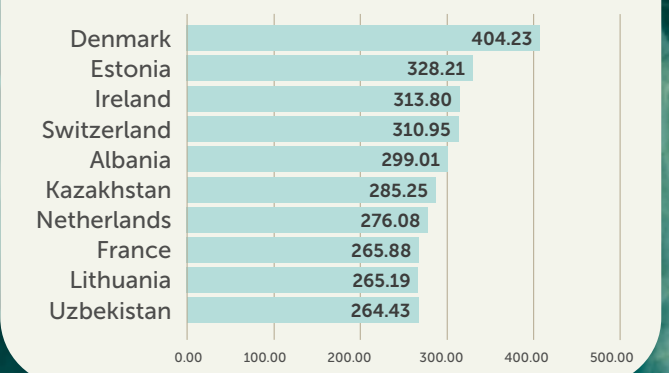
Top 10 countries: Other meat consumption (kg/cap)



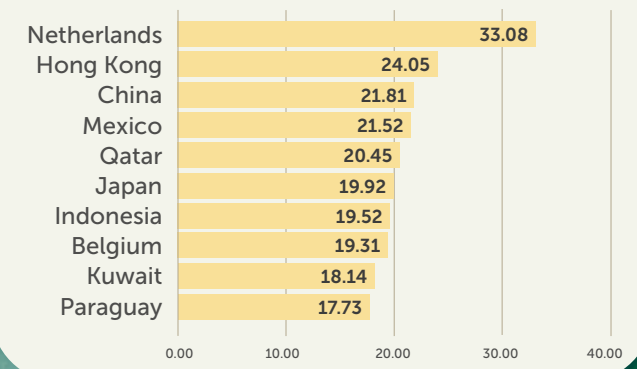
Top 10 countries: Fish and seafood consumption (kg/cap)



Top 10 countries: Dairy consumption (kg/cap)



Top 10 countries: Egg consumption (kg/cap)



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation United Nations (2022)
Note: Countries with a population of less than one million were excluded from per capita calculations.

• These data do not account for food waste, meaning people may not be eating as much as the values indicate, but the animal products are still being consumed (in that waste is still consumption).

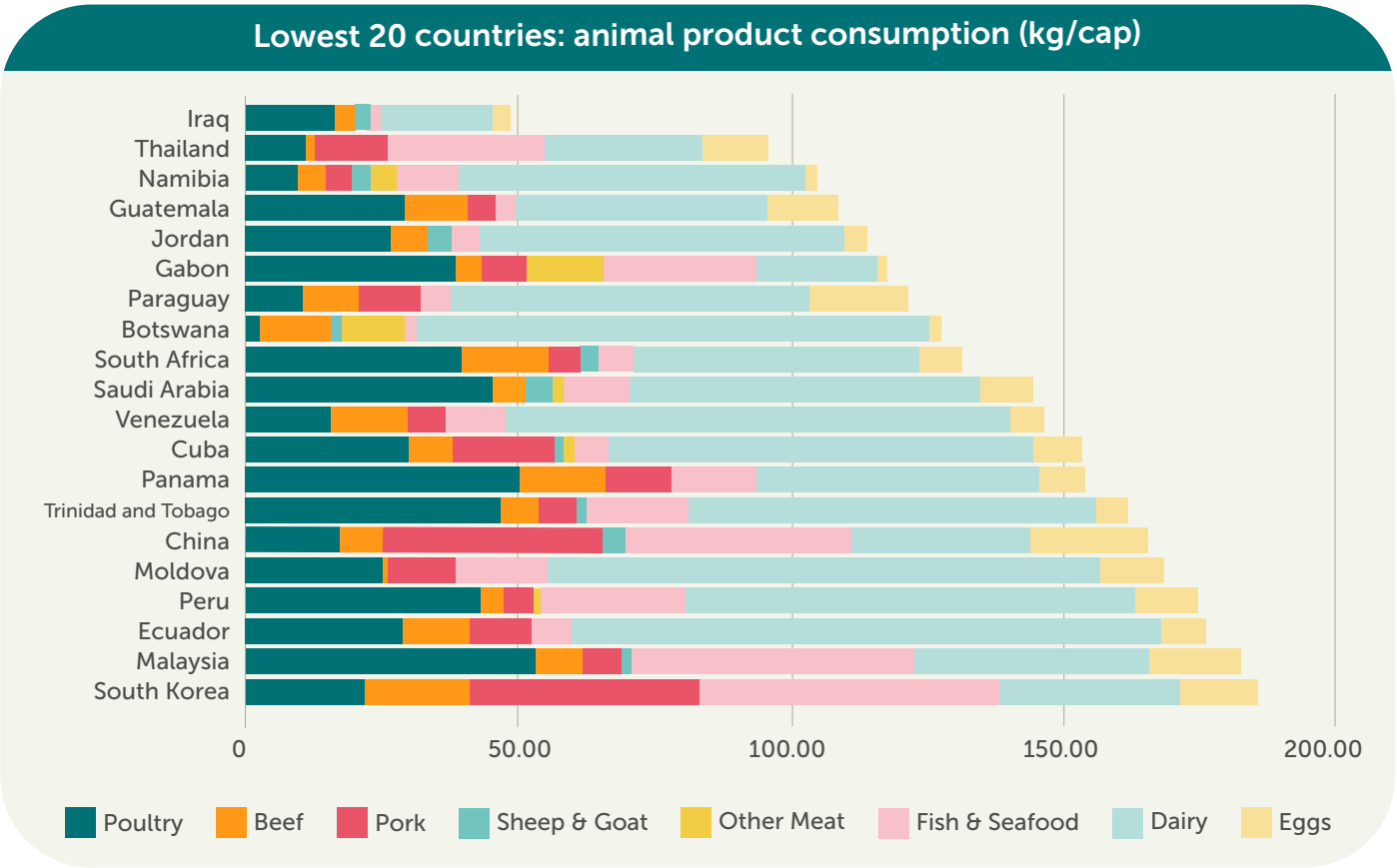
• Dairyconsumption massively surpasses every other product. To demonstrate the scale of the difference, we consider the **Netherlands**. The **Netherlands** is one of the 10 highest consumers of both eggs and dairy. However, this translates to 33.08 kg/capita for eggs and 276.08 kg/capita for dairy – that is, eight times more dairy than eggs.

• According to the latest available data, **Denmark** is the world's highest consumer of animal products per capita. However, in 2023, Denmark instituted a nationwide **plant-based action plan** (Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Denmark, 2023) aimed at increasing the consumption of plant-based food throughout the country. Time will tell if the initiatives in the action plan prove fruitful, with animal product consumption falling in favour of plant-based dietary habits.

• Despite the strong standing of **Israel** in alternative proteins, the country is the highest consumer of poultry and the fourth highest consumer of beef. It is likely that residents consume higher rates of these products to make up for the absence of pig meat in their diet. Pig meat consumption is very low in Israel (1.15 kg/capita per year) (FOASTAT, 2022), likely due to the vast majority of the country abstaining for religious reasons. For Israel's Jewish population, pig meat is not kosher, and, for the Muslim population, it is not halal. Given Israel's religious and cultural context, in addition to their industry leadership in alternative proteins (Section 6.1), Israel appears well placed to adopt a more plant-rich diet. However, their high consumption of poultry and beef showcases that a shift toward plant- and plant-based proteins has not yet been successful.

• Some Muslim-majority countries show a similar pattern to Israel, being nearly non-existent consumers of pig meat, but high consumers of other animal products, especially poultry, such as **Qatar** (number two), the **United Arab Emirates** (number four) and **Kuwait** (number seven).

We also considered which countries consume minimal amounts of animal products because these countries could potentially serve as case studies to be emulated. These results are presented in the following figures.



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation United Nations (2022)

Note: Countries with a population of less than one million were excluded, as were lower and lower to middle income countries. Lower and lower to middle income countries were excluded to control for a potential confounder of undernutrition because lower animal product consumption in low-income countries may simply indicate a lower consumption of all foods, rather than indicating a more plant-rich diet.

- **Iraq** consumes the least animal-based foods by far, about half as much as the next lowest consumer (**Thailand**). However, the circumstances that make **Iraq** such a low consumer are not necessarily directly applicable elsewhere, nor should they be.
    - **Iraq** is in the midst of a severe water crisis, which makes livestock farming extremely precarious (Aty, 2025). Additionally, successive wars and ISIS era displacement have damaged livestock herds and rural infrastructure; many farmers still have not returned to full production (Sadiddin, 2023) and, due to the water crisis, may never do so.
    - Cold chain infrastructure is nascent, making the storage and distribution of perishable animal products difficult and costly. That said, cold chain market in **Iraq** is predicted to expand significantly from its current valuation of USD 630 million to USD 1.1 billion by 2029 (TraceData, 2025). As their cold chain capacity develops, the consumption of animal-based foods is likely to increase, especially because Iraq's cold chain development has been driven, in part, by the expansion of food retail and supermarket chains.[3]
- Upon further investigation, we noted that most (80%) of the 20 lowest consumers were upper middle-income countries, as opposed to high-income countries (only upper middle and high-income countries were considered in this assessment). Meanwhile, 90% of the top 20 highest consumers were high-income countries. This finding reflects other research showing that meat consumption tends to rise hand in hand with GDP (Ritchie, 2024).
- The four high-income countries among the 20 lowest consuming countries are **Saudi Arabia**, **Panama**, **Trinidad and Tobago** and **South Korea**. These countries break the pattern of high-income countries consuming the most animal products. Even so, they should not necessarily be emulated. For example, **Saudi Arabia** is one of the lowest consumers of animal products overall, but the 14th highest poultry consumers globally **South Korea** is another low consumer overall yet is the 11th highest consumer of pork and the second highest consumer of fish and seafood globally. The standing of **South Korea** as a low consumer appears to be driven largely by the low dairy consumption.

7.3. Imports & Exports

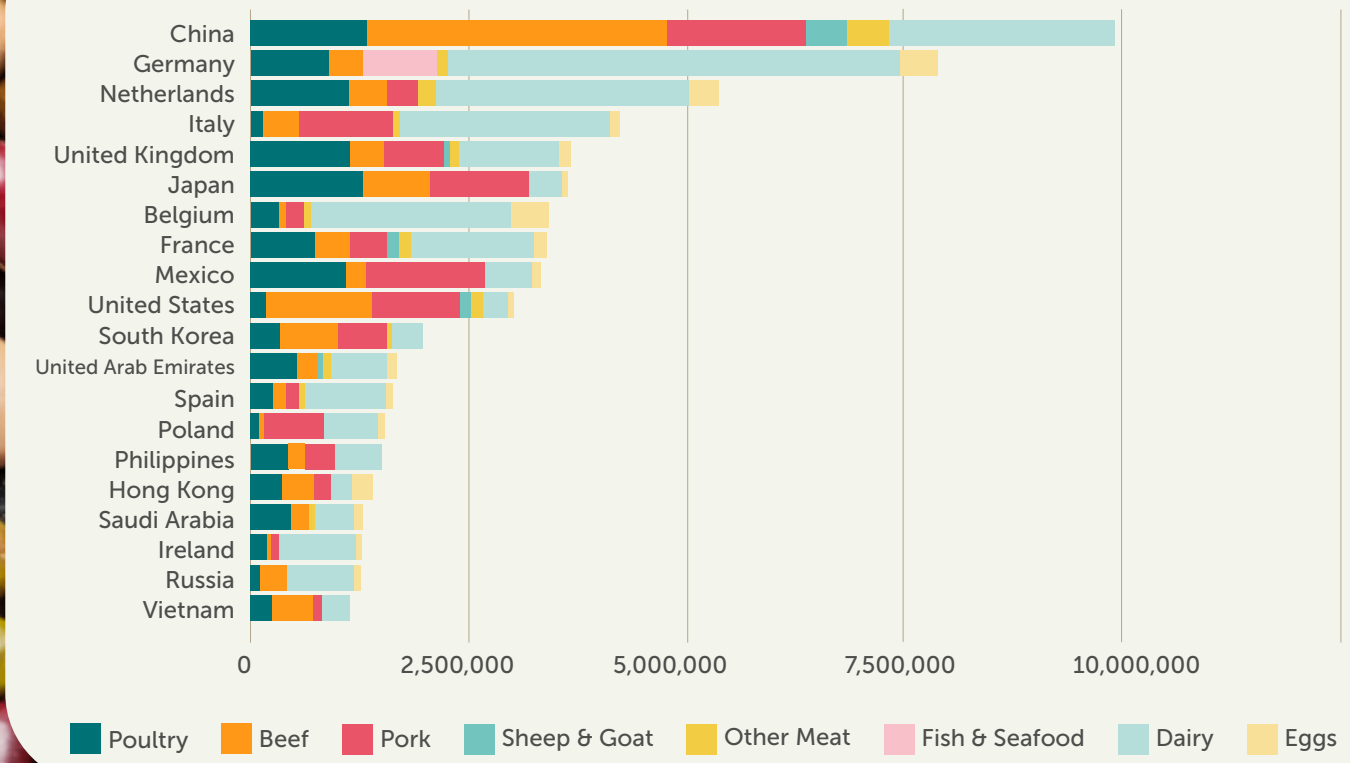
We would expect the largest importers of meat and other animal products to be more open to reduction initiatives because their reliance on these goods from abroad leaves them vulnerable to global market fluctuations, supply chain disruptions (e.g. pandemics, geopolitical conflicts, climate events affecting feed production) and price volatility. As such, advocates could strategically target these countries, leveraging compelling food security and economic arguments. For instance, advocates can highlight that prioritising plant-based staples such as legumes offers a more cost-effective and land-efficient pathway to national food security, significantly reducing vulnerability to disruption.

By contrast, we expect the top exporters of meat and other animal products to be less open to reduction initiatives because they will likely have a vested interest in production continuing as usual, if not increasing. For these countries, animal agriculture is a core part of their economy and reduction initiatives present a risk to their export revenue, GDP and employment if adequate alternatives are not implemented. Opposition from these countries has been observed. For example, delegates from Argentina and Brazil, two of the world's top beef producers and exporters, interfered with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 2023 report (Energy Monitor, 2023), explicitly pushing to remove the IPCC's references to the health and climate benefits of plant-based diets.

As in previous sections, we first present all animal products in aggregate, followed by breakdowns of individual animal products (FOASTAT, 2023).

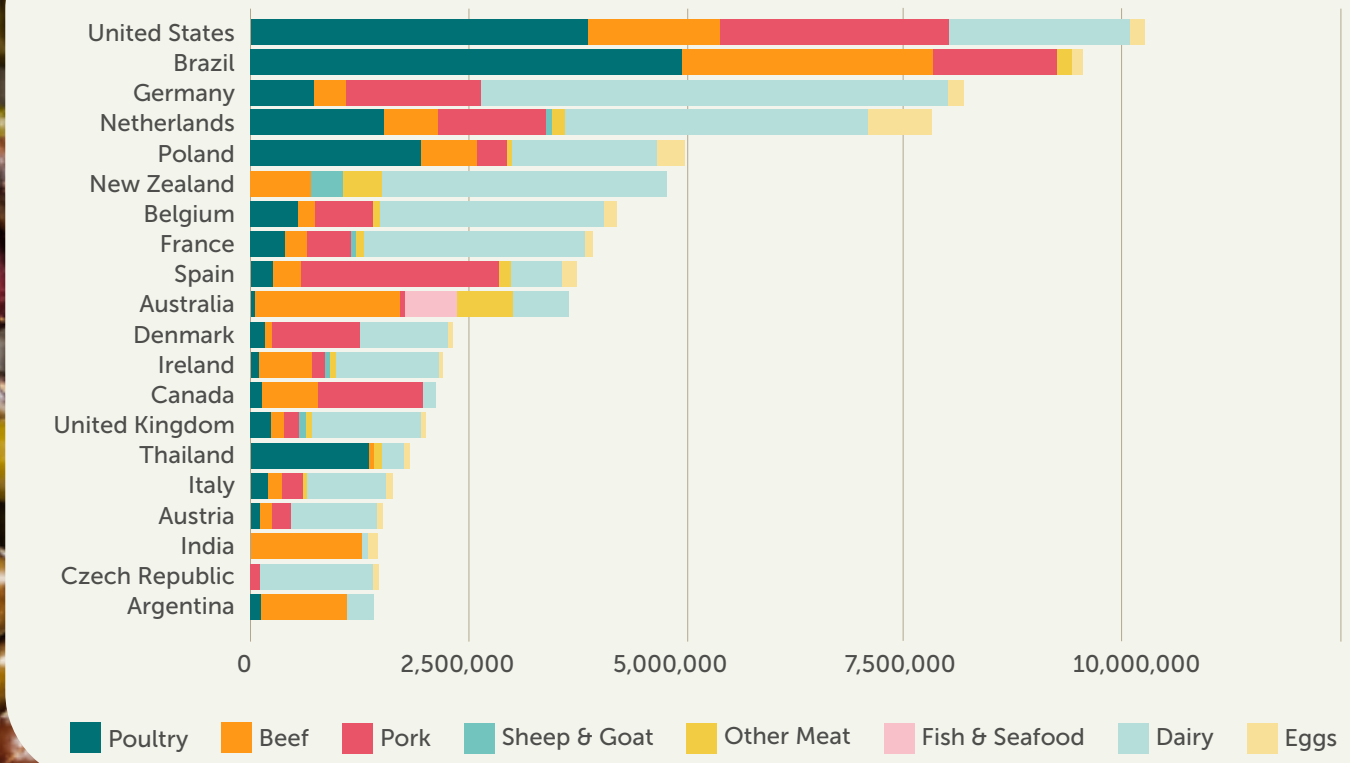
[3] However, this expansion is primarily driven by rising demand for pharmaceuticals that depend on strict temperature controls (e.g. vaccines).

Top 20 countries: animal product imports (tonnes)



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation 2023

Top 20 countries: animal product exports (tonnes)



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation 2023

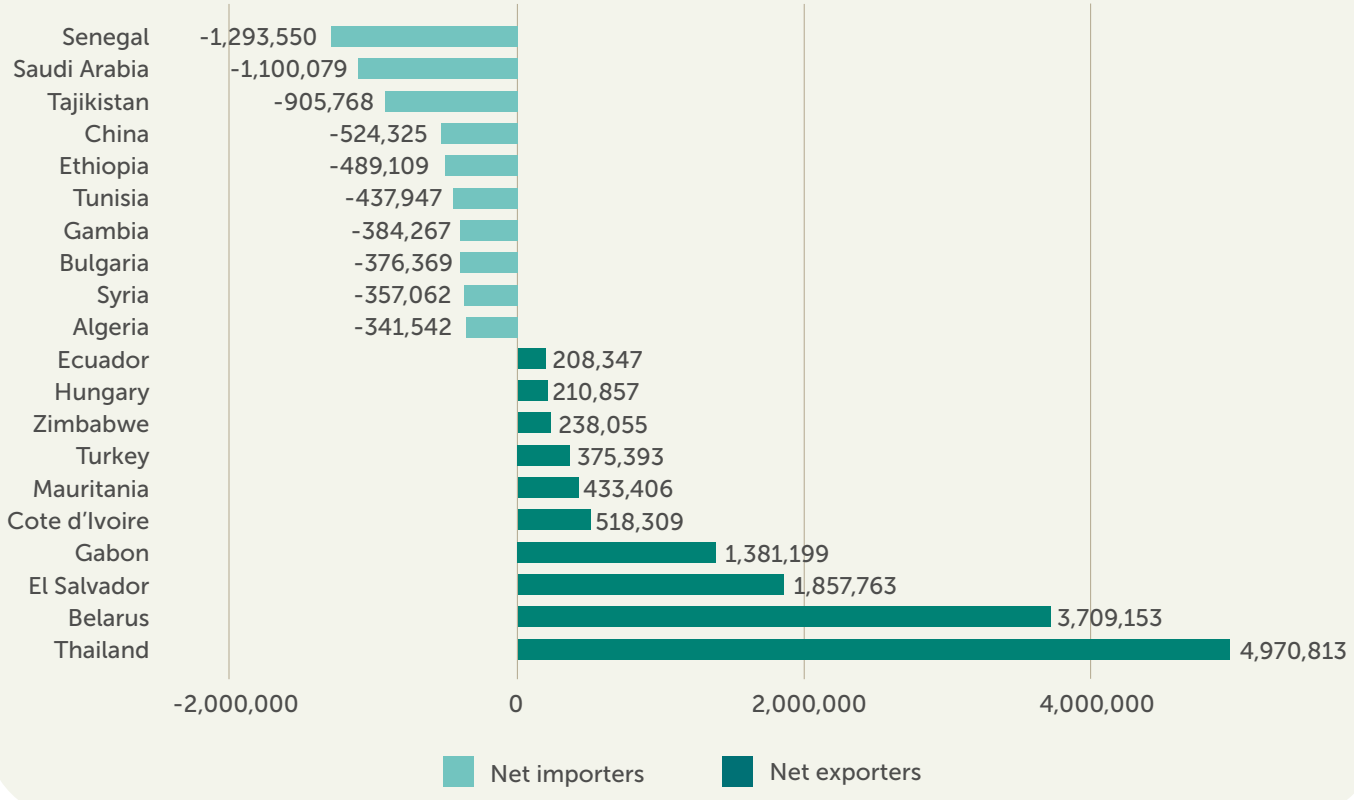
Various countries are both top importers and exporters of the same product, indicating the complexity of value chains. Value chains are such that goods often pass through multiple countries on their way to their final destination. Major ports like Rotterdam (the **Netherlands**) and Antwerp (**Belgium**) are trade hubs, with products often passing directly from one ship to another or undergoing minimal processing in-country before being re-exported. This can make the **Netherlands** and **Belgium** (among other countries) look like major importers and exporters when really, they are a single link in a longer chain, neither the original producer nor the final recipient. **Twenty percent of the Netherlands' poultry exports in 2020, for example, were re-exports, not domestically produced** (Dank et al, 2022). The distortion of trade statistics borne from these re-export hubs is known, fittingly, as the Rotterdam–Antwerp effect. This also explains how the **Netherlands** can be a top poultry exporter without being a top producer.Bearing this in mind, advocates should cross-check import and export data with production data, where relevant, to ensure they have the full picture of the flow of goods. For example, if advocates wanted to target the biggest meat importers, under the assumption that such countries would be more agreeable to plant-based initiatives, they must ensure that they are not mistakenly targeting a mere link in the value chain.

Bearing this in mind, advocates should cross-check import and export data with production data, where relevant, to ensure they have the full picture of the flow of goods. For example, if advocates wanted to target the biggest meat importers, under the assumption that such countries would be more agreeable to plant-based initiatives, they must ensure that they are not mistakenly targeting a mere link in the value chain.

Attempting to control for this value chain distortion, we calculated the net import and export rates per animal product (see supplementary materials for the top 20 import and export countries per product, prior to net calculations). A negative value indicates that a country is a net importer of the product, whereas a positive value indicates that they are a net exporter.

Top 10 net poultry importers and exporter (tonnes)

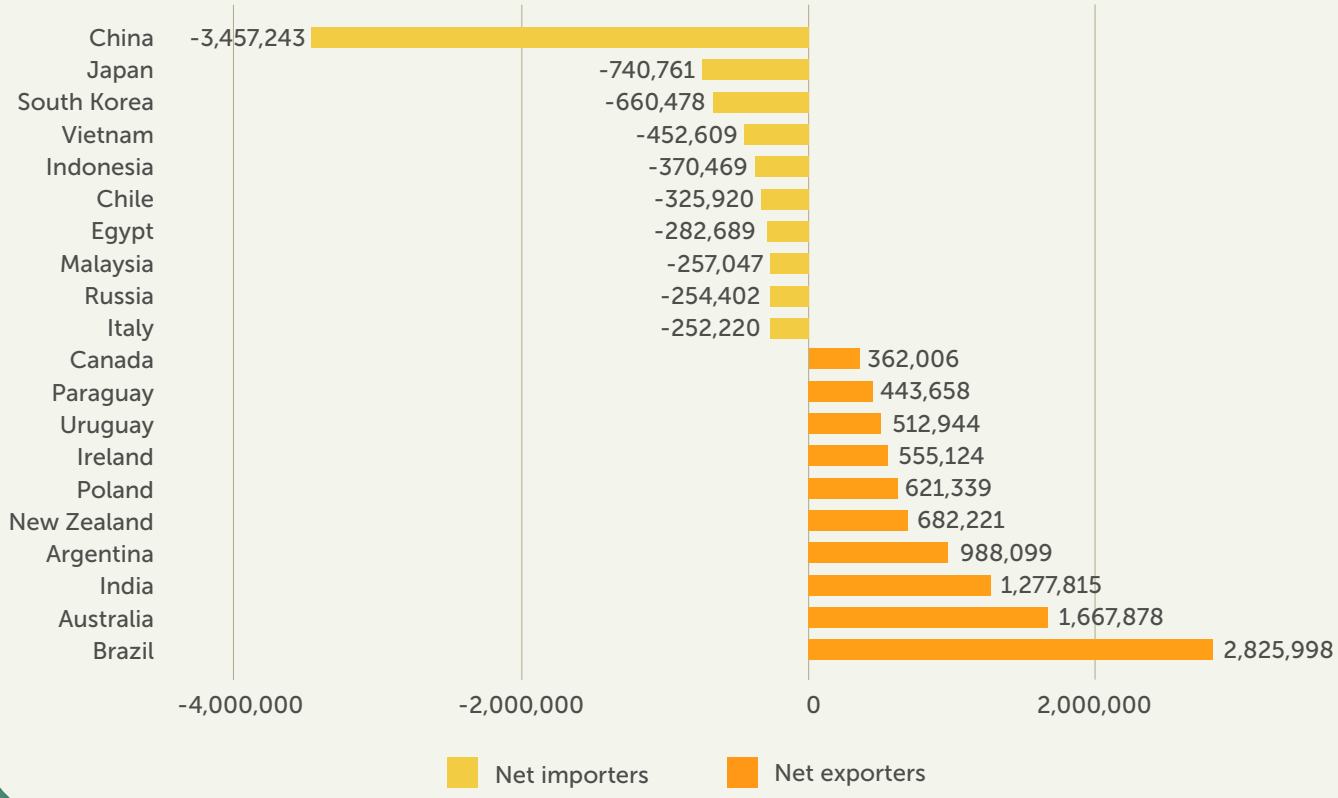
Senegal is the greatest poultry importer, and Thailand is the #1 exporter by a wide margin.



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation 2023

Top 10 net beef importers and exporter (tonnes)

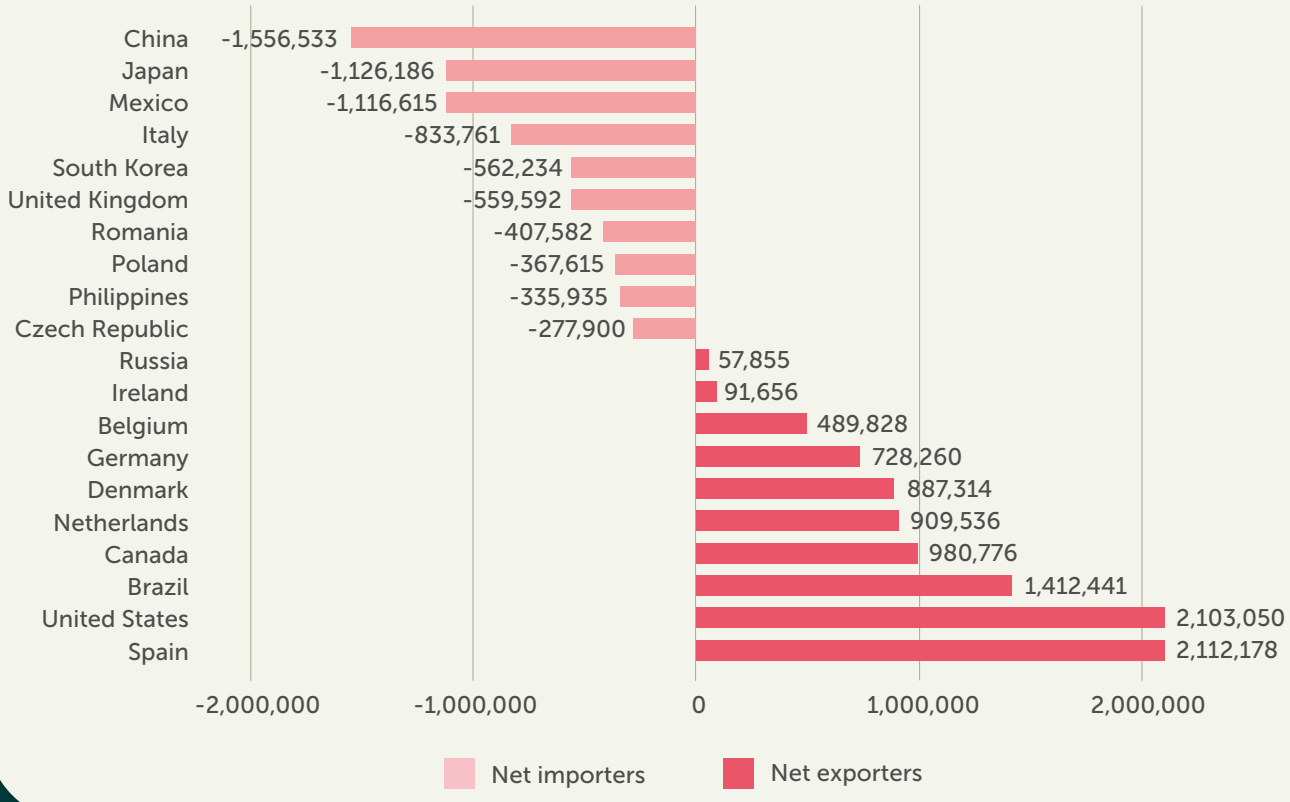
China imports more beef than the following 8 highest importers combined. Brazil is the top exporter.



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation 2023

Top 10 net pork importers and exporter (tonnes)

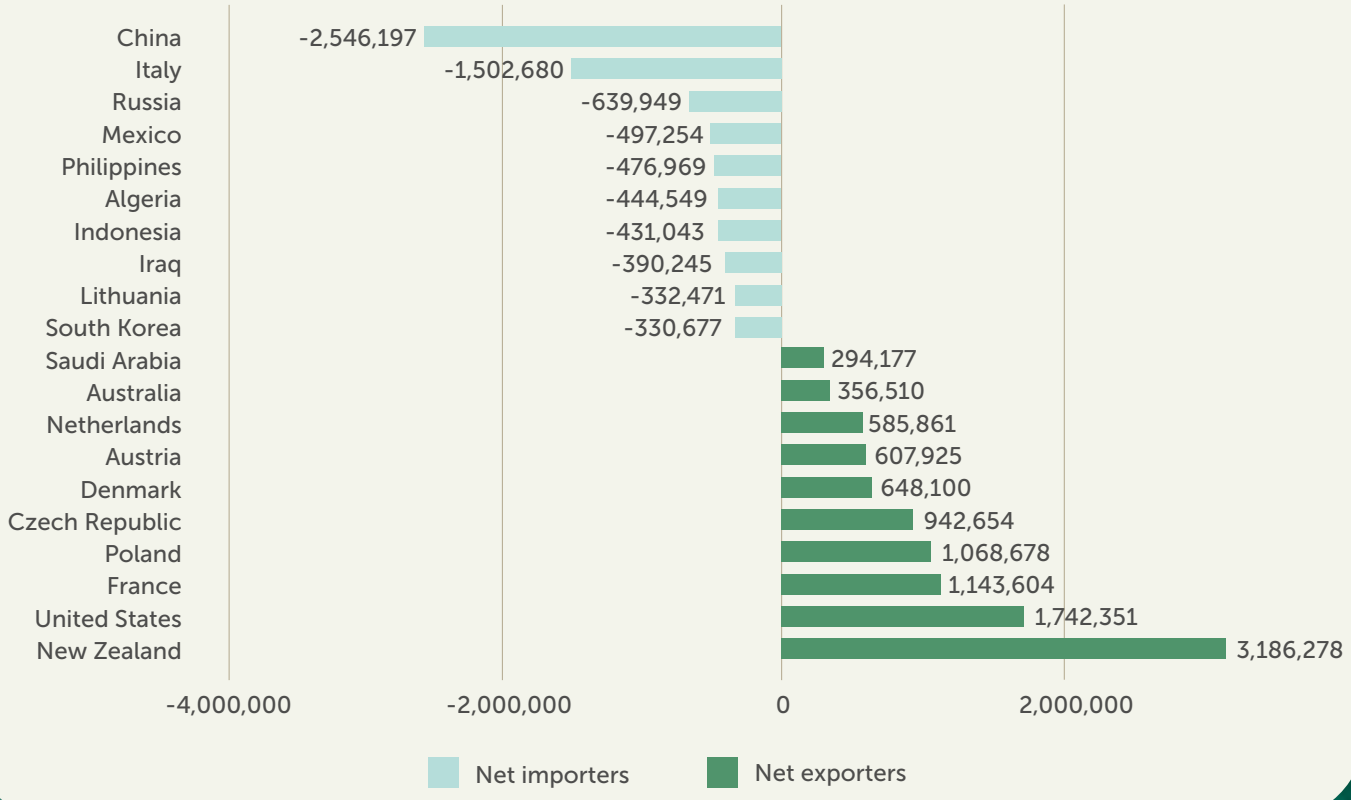
China is the top pork importer, while Spain narrowly beats the US as the top exporter.



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation 2023

Top 10 net dairy importers and exporter (tonnes)

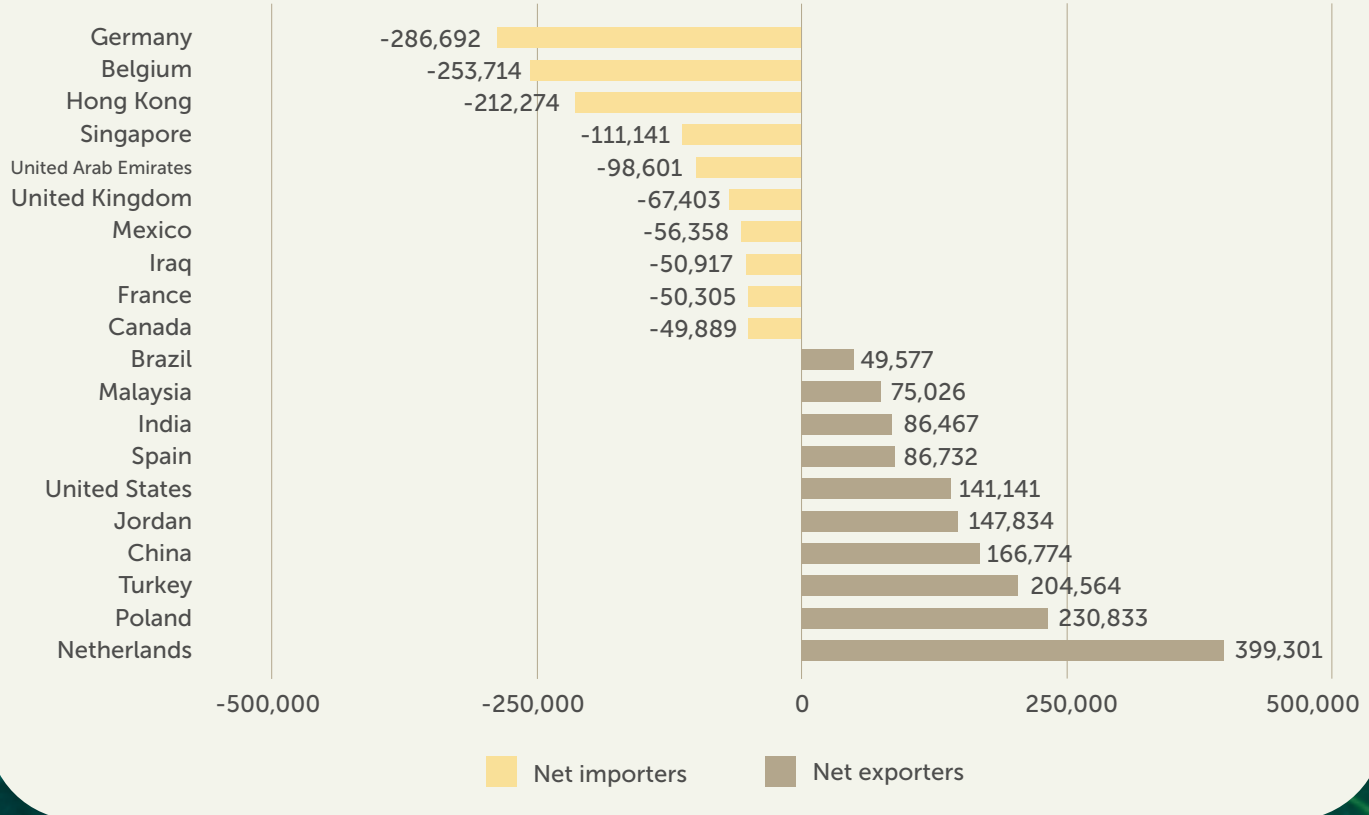
China is the #1 dairy importer, despite widespread lactose intolerance. New Zealand is the #1 exporter.



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation 2023

Top 10 net egg importers and exporter (tonnes)

Germany imports the most eggs globally, and its neighbour the Netherlands is the top exporting country.



Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation 2023

As stated previously, countries that rely on imports may respond more favourably to alternative protein/animal product reduction initiatives once the cost-effectiveness and land efficiency of plant production (namely, domestic plant production) is highlighted. Plant production offers a more stable and economical path to national food security, which is likely to appeal to governments. However, these arguments require nuance because not all countries will have the arable land needed for local plant production. For example, **Saudi Arabia** is one of the highest importers of poultry. However, domestic plant production is not an easy swap given the country's extremely limited amount of arable land (**1.6%, as of 2022**) (World Bank, 2023). We urge advocates to cross-reference import and export data with each country's capacity for plant production to ensure food security arguments are practical.

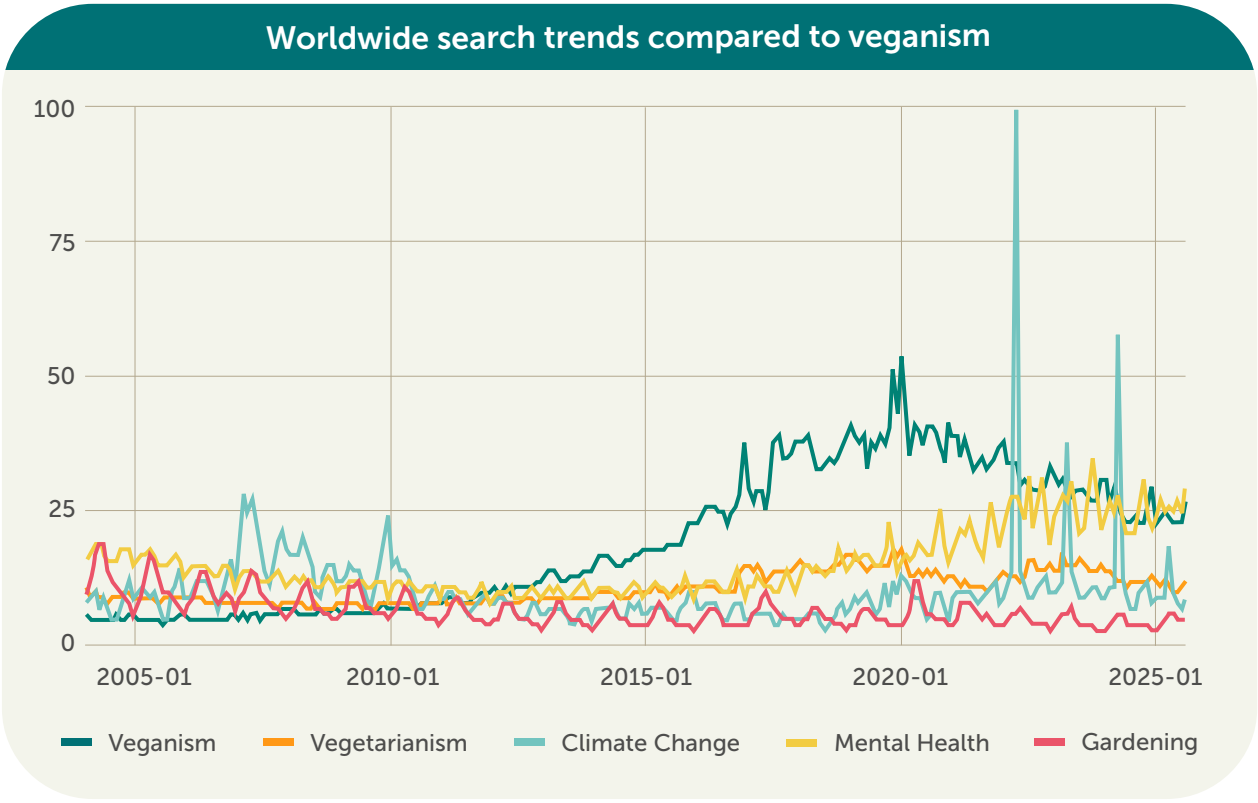
8. TRENDS AND MOMENTUM

We used **Google Trends** (2025) as a rough proxy for interest in veganism, acknowledging that not all interest will be represented in Google searches. Google Trends appears simple, but it requires some explanation to fully grasp the comparisons between countries.

Google Trends measures the relative interest in a search topic over time, not the absolute number of searches. When analysing the topic of 'veganism', Google includes all related searches, even misspellings and different languages, providing a broad view of public interest. The data are displayed on a scale from 0 to 100, which represents proportional interest, not search volume. The value of 100 signifies the peak level of interest for that topic within the specified time frame, relative to the country's total search volume.

When comparing multiple countries, the values are always relative to each other within the same graph. Google Trends limits comparisons to five countries at a time and it is crucial to remember that you cannot compare data from different graphs. The highest value of 100 on any given graph represents the country with the highest proportional interest and all the other values are scaled relative to that peak. All values are normalised to account for differences in total search volume across countries, so a country with a higher absolute number of searches might still have a lower proportional interest.

First, we present a chart showing different search topics globally to put veganism into perspective; 'vegetarianism' is included as a dietary (and lifestyle) comparison and 'climate change' and 'mental health' are included as similar weighty social and political issues.[4] 'Gardening' is included as an entirely unrelated, but (assumedly) popular topic that can serve as a relative baseline.

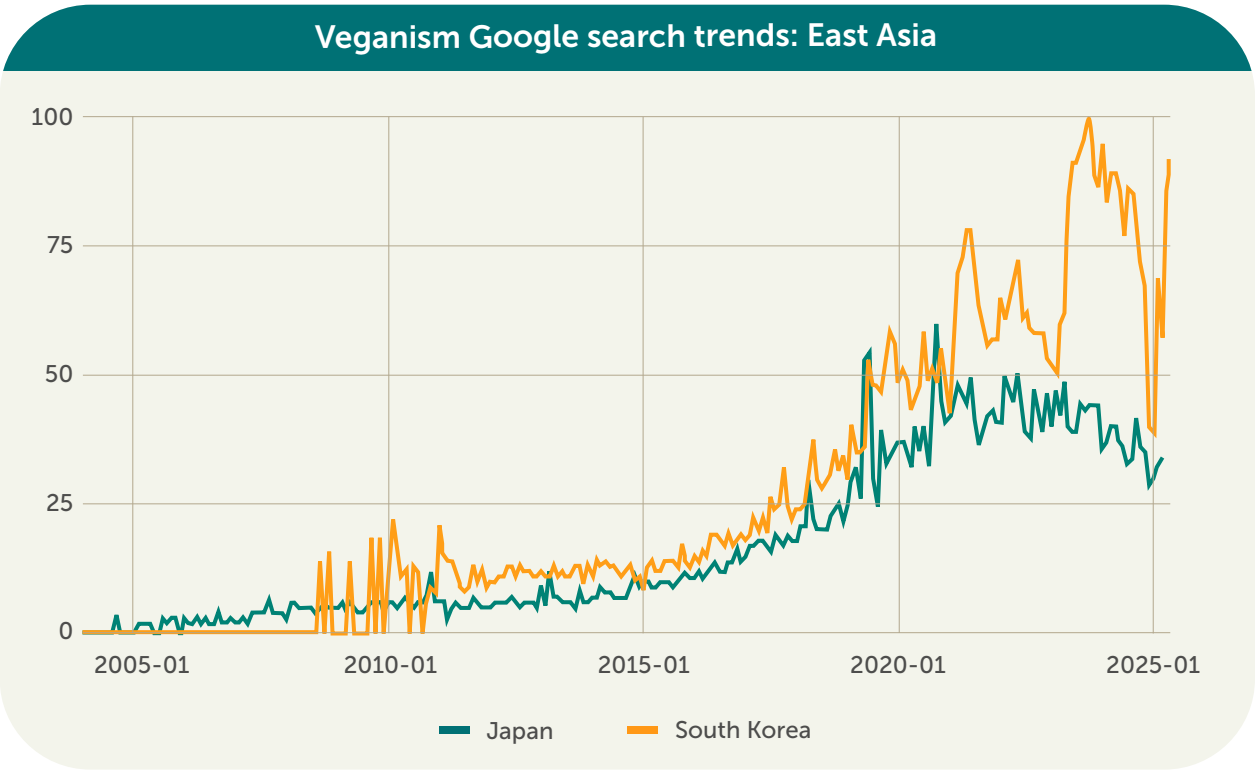


Source: Google Trends 2025

[4] Although climate change is an environmental issue, it has been highly politicised and is considered a social issue in many contexts.

- Notably, 'veganism' is significantly more popular than 'vegetarianism', with this split beginning in 2012.
- Currently, 'veganism' is about on par with 'mental health'.
- Apart from brief surges in April 2022, 2023 and 2024, 'climate change' is demonstrably less popular than 'veganism' overall.
- Interest in 'gardening' is much lower than 'veganism'. At the time of writing, 'veganism' is about five times more popular and, considering all data from 2004 to the present day, it is about three times more popular overall.

Next, we turned to the 21 countries of interest, assessing them within their respective regions (i.e. North America, Latin America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Middle East, East Asia, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific).



Source: Google Trends 2025

Note: China does not use Google, so was not included in this graph.

- Interest in veganism peaked across most countries in 2020, with interest steadily settling back to roughly 2016 levels since then.
- Some countries break this pattern, with interest plateauing or even rising. Interest may be growing in **South Korea** in particular, presenting a potential opportunity for vegan initiatives, although the pattern is not entirely clear yet.
- Interest in veganism does not guarantee positive interest. Interest may surge due to negative press, for example.

However, a lack of interest in veganism does not necessarily indicate a lack of progress. For example, **Denmark's plant-based action plan** (Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Denmark, 2023) , launched in 2023, **consciously avoids any mention of veganism (or vegetarianism)** (Carrington, 2025) given the potential for these terms to polarise. As such, veganism, by name, may not be gaining any additional attention, while the landscape to support veganism may be growing.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1. For individuals

A surge of headlines may lead you to believe that the world has it out for vegans. But, according to our own polling, people tend to have neutral or positive feelings towards the philosophy of veganism and towards vegans themselves. Even in **Japan**, where feelings do lean slightly more towards the negative, most of our respondents still had neutral to positive feelings toward veganism (52%) and towards vegans (59%). **India** has the most favourable feelings towards veganism and vegans by far, proving a major exception to the trend of neutrality. A sweeping majority (76%) of respondents reported positive feelings towards veganism/vegans, reflecting the unique cultural, historical and religious context in **India**.

However, pro-vegan sentiment does not guarantee vegan-friendly dining experiences. For vegan foodies planning their next trip, **New Zealand** leads in per capita dining options globally and **Iceland** has an unusually high rate of restaurants offering vegan dishes – 43% of restaurants in **Iceland** have at least one vegan option. For those wishing to explore fully vegan restaurants, rather than non-veg*n restaurants with vegan menu items, **Taiwan** comes out on top, with about 15 vegan restaurants for every one million people. **Singapore** is also a curious case, having the most vegetarian restaurants per capita in the world by far (a massive 95 restaurants per million people). With the rich hawker centre restaurant culture of **Singapore**, you are sure to find at least a few vegan options.

9.2. For advocates and organisations

Consider how your campaign requirements align with a country's economic context. Countries that are dependent on animal product imports are in a more vulnerable position and governments may be receptive to arguments about price stability, food security and the land efficiency of domestic plant production, although these arguments require nuance. Check arable land constraints because not all countries have the resources for domestic plant production. Beware of re-export hubs that distort who the 'real' importers and exporters are because some countries are a mere link in the supply chain.

Meet local culture where it is, with all its contradictions. High densities of vegan dining in various countries signal practical openings, but the picture is complicated. For example, **Portugal** has the second highest number of vegan restaurants per capita in the world, but they also have the third highest fish/seafood consumption rate per capita. In **Israel**, religious avoidance of pig meat coexists with very high poultry/beef consumption, indicating that an embrace of plant-based alternatives is not automatic, even when other factors align.

Look beyond the hype. Search terms related to 'veganism' peaked around 2020 and have eased since then. However, we should take these trends with a grain of salt and consider **Denmark** as a case study. The country's nationwide plant-based action plan intentionally avoids any mention of 'vegan' or even 'vegetarian'. So, even if explicit interest in the term 'vegan' wanes, the landscape to support its adoption may be growing.

9.3. For businesses

For those working in the APA industry, these maps may help to plan for strategic expansion in the markets most open to alternatives. According to some data, consumers in **China** and **India** are nearly twice as likely as those in the **USA** to indicate they are 'very or extremely likely' to buy plant-based meat. Also consider each markets' individual tastes. Produce the types of products that actually align with people's appetites and, by extension, actually displace the demand for animal products.

Restaurateurs and alternative protein entrepreneurs both must strike a delicate balance. They need to identify areas where existing businesses have thrived, signalling a robust market, while simultaneously steering clear of over-saturation. When forecasting for the success of your business, carefully consider factors such as the popularity of flexitarianism and meat reduction/avoidance, the data on acceptance of and intentions to purchase animal product alternatives, and the number of existing vegan/vegetarian businesses. APA companies have a unique dynamic to consider because they can be based in a country with favourable business conditions but not be confined to selling in the same country. These businesses should therefore also consider how exporting fits into their business model.

10. FURTHER CULTURAL INSIGHTS

10.1. North America
10.1.1. USA
- Cultural Insights: USA

10.1.2. Canada
- Cultural Insights: Canada

10.2. Latin America
10.2.1. Mexico
- Cultural Insights: Mexico

10.2.2. Brazil
- Cultural Insights: Brazil

10.3. East Asia
10.3.1. Japan
- Cultural Insights: Japan

10.3.2. China
- Cultural Insights: China

10.3.3. South Korea
- Cultural Insights: South Korea

10.4. The Pacific
10.4.1. Australia
- Cultural Insights: Australia

10.4.2. New Zealand
- Cultural Insights: New Zealand

10.5. South Asia
10.5.1. India
- Cultural Insights: India

10.6. Western Europe
10.6.1. Denmark
- Cultural Insights: Denmark

10.6.2. Germany
- Cultural Insights: Germany

10.6.3. The Netherlands
- Cultural Insights: Netherlands

10.7. Eastern Europe
10.7.1 Russia
- Cultural Insights: Russia

10.8. Middle East
10.8.1. Israel
- Cultural Insights: Israel

10.8.2. Türkiye
- Cultural Insights: Türkiye

10.9. Sub-Saharan Africa
10.9.2 Zimbabwe
- Cultural Insights: Zimbabwe

10.9.3 Cameroon
- Cultural Insights: Cameroon

10.9.4 Kenya
- Cultural Insights: Kenya

10.9.5 Nigeria
- Cultural Insights: Nigeria

10.9.6 South Africa
- Cultural Insights: South Africa

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Supplementary materials (extended methods, margin of error calculations, exact values for sentiment toward veg*ns/veg*nism, non-net import and export values, the survey tool and the AI prompt used for country report drafts) are available at VATW Supplementary Materials

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The Vegan Society acknowledges that in some of the countries included in this report, animal and human rights abuses are carried out, and well documented. The decision to include any countries with records of human rights abuses in this report does not in any way signal a de facto acceptance of, or agreement with, the actions of those countries and their governments . It is extremely important to The Vegan Society that in publishing this research it is clear we do not in any way promote, support or condone the exploitation of or discrimination against any human beings. The Vegan Society recognises the connection between different forms of oppression and violence in operation around the world; this includes oppression taking place in some of the countries included in this research. Through its promotion of veganism as a way of living that excludes animal exploitation and cruelty, the Vegan Society works hard every day to secure freedom from this oppression and exploitation. We understand how different dehumanising systems of power, exploitation and violence do not occur in isolation but instead impact on animal rights, as well as human rights. These systems overlap to increase the challenges facing those of us working for liberation and freedom from exploitation and cruelty.

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