



Encouraging Sustainable food choices

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Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan and wider context



- Objective to meet a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030
- Important part of achieving this goal will be encouraging individuals to consider more low carbon food choices.
- Auckland Council declared a climate emergency (2019)

"A low carbon, resilient, local food system that provides all Aucklanders with access to fresh and healthy food"

Firstly, we prioritised our desired behaviour

We focussed on the following behaviour:

Incrementally increasing your intake of plant-based food



‘The lesser option’: The perception that plant-based meal options don’t taste as good as animal-based meals.

Choice overload: Making food choices based on multiple factors like health, climate impact and sustainability can overwhelm consumers and lead to choice paralysis. This suggests that education or intention alone is not sufficient to change behaviour.

Intention-action gap: Despite having the desire or intent to make a change, people often do not follow through, e.g. getting fit.

1. EAT Lancet Summary report <https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/eat-lancet-commission-summary-report/>
2. Colmar Brunton. (2019). Hungry for Plant-Based: New Zealand Consumer Insights. Food Frontier & Life Health Foods. Retrieved from:
3. The behavioural insights team. (2020). A Menu for Change: Using behavioural science to promote sustainable diets around the world. <https://www.bi.team/publications/a-menu-for-change/>

This lead us to behavioural insights to test

Insight 1

Choice architecture

Integrating plant-based food choices and animal-based products within a purchasing journey could lead to an increase in plant-based choices.

Insight 2

Education messaging effectiveness

Real or perceived tastiness could drive food choice behaviour more than reported environmental benefits.

Insight 3

Sustainable labelling

Although taste is a core driver, labelling food with some form of sustainability cue could also lead to an increase in purchases.

We designed a series of scenarios to test these insights. The survey went out to the Auckland Council citizens panel and had **1,935 responses**.

We carefully designed the scenarios to, where possible, not ask people what they would intend to do, but rather take them through scenarios where we see their actual choices. This is to help reduce bias in people's answers.







Test 1: Integrating plant-based and animal-based products

Version 1: Segregated choice architecture




Superbuy!

search...

Meat

 Beef mince premium 500g \$12⁰⁰ Add to trolley	 Prime angus meatballs 360g \$12⁹⁹ Add to trolley	 Chicken diced 500g \$8⁰⁰ Add to trolley
 Pork meatballs 360g \$10⁹⁵ Add to trolley	 Venison meatballs 400g \$12⁹⁵ Add to trolley	 Lamb mince 350g \$13⁰⁰ Add to trolley

Plant based










 Plant based meatballs 290g \$12⁹⁰ Add to trolley	 Amazeballs - beetroot, kumara & quinoa balls 350g \$8⁹⁵ Add to trolley	 Fefafel bites original \$6⁹⁰ Add to trolley
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Version 2: Integrated choice architecture

Superbuy!

search...


Filling

 Plant based meatballs 290g \$12⁹⁰ Add to trolley	 Prime angus meatballs 360g \$12⁹⁹ Add to trolley	 Fefafel bites original \$6⁹⁰ Add to trolley
 Beef mince premium 500g \$12⁰⁰ Add to trolley	 Amazeballs - beetroot, kumara & quinoa balls 350g \$8⁹⁵ Add to trolley	 Chicken diced 500g \$8⁰⁰ Add to trolley
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Version 3: Integrated with normalising image

Superbuy!

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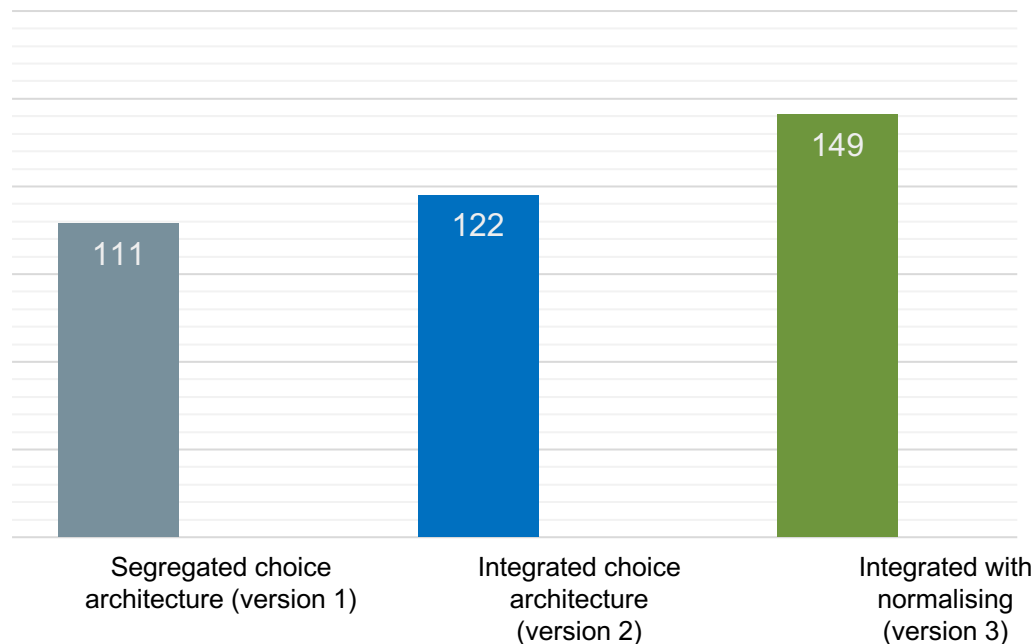


Filling

 Plant based meatballs 290g \$12⁹⁰ Add to trolley	 Prime angus meatballs 360g \$12⁹⁹ Add to trolley	 Fefafel bites original \$6⁹⁰ Add to trolley
 Beef mince premium 500g \$12⁰⁰ Add to trolley	 Amazeballs - beetroot, kumara & quinoa balls 350g \$8⁹⁵ Add to trolley	 Chicken diced 500g \$8⁰⁰ Add to trolley

Result 1: Integrating plant-based options led to a 34% increase in plant-based choices

Number of respondents who chose a plant-based choice



34% increase in plant-based choices when plant-based and animal-based products were integrated, and a normalising image was used.**

**statistically significant change (.95 confidence)

N total respondents choosing plant-choices = 382

N total sample of respondents including meat-choices = 1,865

This excludes all survey respondents who classified themselves already as vegan, vegetarian or pescatarian.

Test 2: Tastiness message over reported environmental benefits

Version 1:
Educational marketing message

**You can reduce your
carbon emissions by
shifting towards
a plant rich diet**



Version 2:
Social norm marketing message

**One in three
New Zealanders have
already increased their
consumption of
plant-based meals**



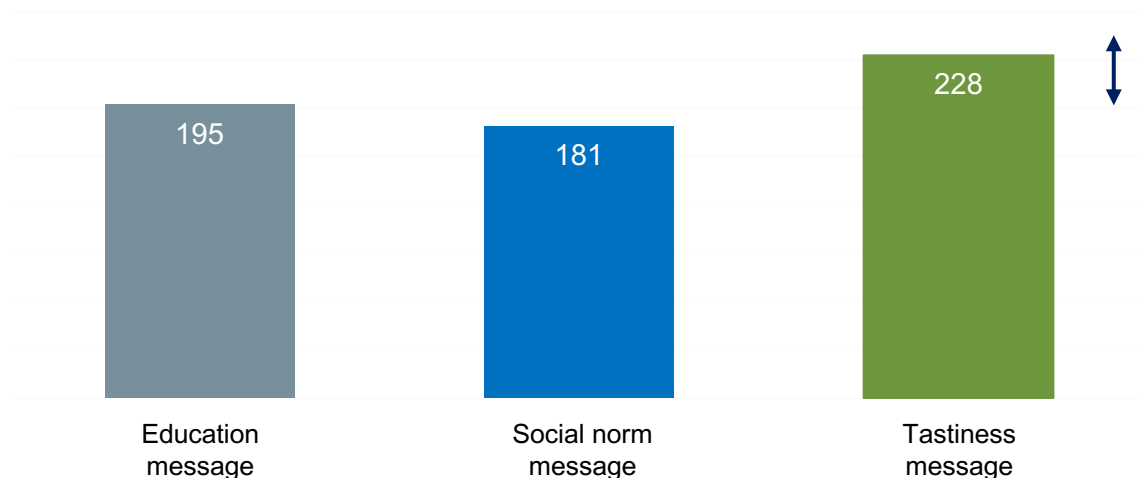
Version 3:
Tastiness marketing message

**Have you tried some
of the new tasty
plant-based recipes
developed by top chefs?**



Result 2: Real or perceived tastiness will drive food choice behaviour more than reported environmental benefits

Number of respondents who stated they'd consider increasing their plant-based meal choices —
categorised by which marketing message they were shown



11%* increase in plant-based consideration compared to traditional education messaging

*statistically significant change (.90 confidence)







Test 3: Adding a sustainable label

Version 1:
No label

Superbuy!

search...

Food bags




 <p>Veg & lentil spaghetti bolognese</p> <p>\$25⁰⁰</p> <p>Add to trolley</p>	 <p>Pork sausage penne pasta</p> <p>\$25⁰⁰</p> <p>Add to trolley</p>	 <p>Fully loaded veg nachos</p> <p>\$25⁰⁰</p> <p>Add to trolley</p>
 <p>Chicken strip tacos</p> <p>\$25⁰⁰</p> <p>Add to trolley</p>	 <p>Creamy chickpea curry</p> <p>\$25⁰⁰</p> <p>Add to trolley</p>	 <p>Coconut beef curry</p> <p>\$25⁰⁰</p> <p>Add to trolley</p>

Version 2:
“I’m a sustainable choice” label

Superbuy!

search...

Food bags







 <p>Veg & lentil spaghetti bolognese</p> <p>\$25⁰⁰</p> <p>Add to trolley</p>	 <p>Pork sausage penne pasta</p> <p>\$25⁰⁰</p> <p>Add to trolley</p>	 <p>Fully loaded veg nachos</p> <p>\$25⁰⁰</p> <p>Add to trolley</p>
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Version 3:
“Popular Choice” social norm label

Superbuy!

search...

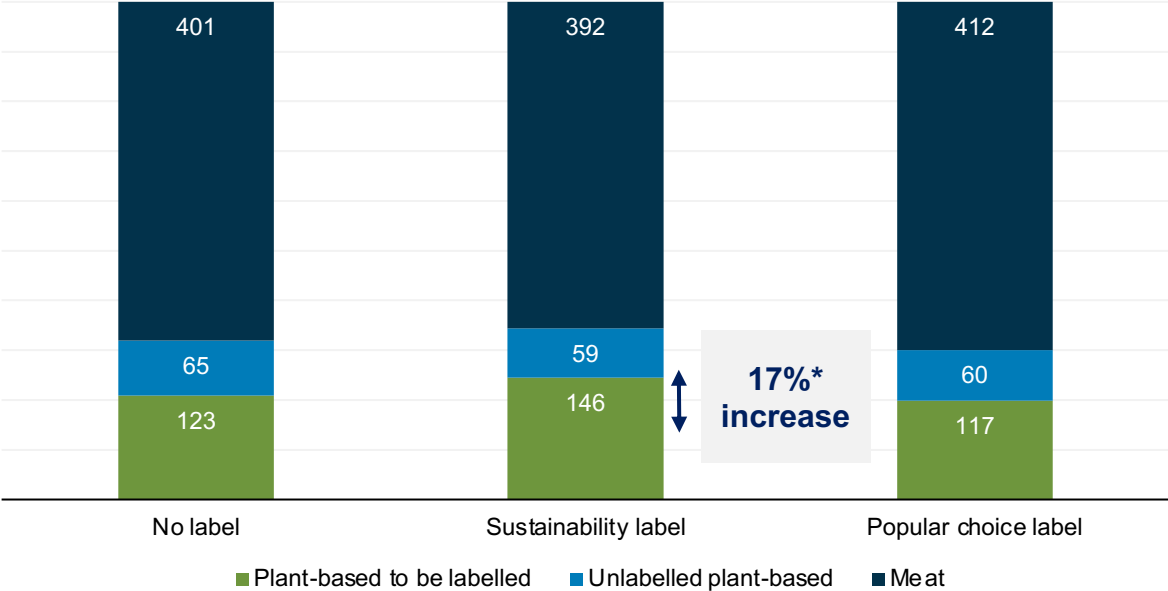
Food bags

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Result 3: Labelling food with some form of sustainability cue leads to an increase in purchases

Respondent food bag choices in supermarket scenario

17%* increase in respondents choosing options that were labelled 'sustainable' (without changing any of the options provided)



*statistically significant change (.90 confidence)

N total respondents choosing plant-choices = 570
N total sample of respondents including meat-choices = 1,771
This excludes all survey respondents who classified themselves already as vegan, vegetarian or pescatarian.

Next steps

- Deliver a pilot /action research in 2021/2022 (real world application)
- Continue conversations with supermarkets/grocery stores
- Explore how to apply insights in Council's own cafes
- Apply insights to Live Lightly website and marketing
- Share these findings
- Long-term consideration – 'green' labelling to help consumers make better choices



Ngā mihi nui

Any questions?



A collage of fresh fruits and vegetables including raspberries, goji berries, strawberries, apples, tomatoes, radishes, and bell peppers. The items are arranged around the central text, with raspberries and goji berries at the top, strawberries and radishes on the right, and apples and tomatoes at the bottom.

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