



Belgium plant-based food retail market insights

2020-2022



Executive Summary

Retail sales data from NielsenIQ covering 13 European countries shows that sales of plant-based foods have grown 6% in 2022 – and 21% since 2020 – to reach €5.8 billion.

The global shift towards plant-based diets has sparked a revolution in the food industry, with major food manufacturers and retailers embracing the change. In Europe, plant-based food retail sales have surged in recent years as new products and innovations have come to market, enabling more consumers to purchase next-generation plant-based meat, seafood, eggs and dairy that are competitive with animal products on taste, price and convenience.

Plant-based foods in Europe are a €5.8 billion market.

The Good Food Institute Europe analysed NielsenIQ plant-based data for 13 European countries – Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and the UK – to calculate the size and growth of the plant-based food retail market from 2020 to 2022.

€5.8 billion	+6%	+4%	21%
The retail market for plant-based foods is worth €5.8 billion, up from €4.8 billion in 2020.	The value of plant-based food sales grew by 6% between 2021 and 2022.	Plant-based food unit sales grew by 4% between 2021 and 2022.	Plant-based food euro sales and unit sales grew by 21% between 2020 and 2022.

To contextualise the sales performance of plant-based categories in 2022, it is important to note the unique macroeconomic environment that was present due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, global trade tensions, and inflation. While the growth of the plant-based food retail market decelerated in 2022 compared to 2021, sales continued to grow in terms of both value and units, demonstrating strong demand from consumers for these products despite these challenges.

Overview of Europe-wide plant-based category sales summary, 2022

	2022 sales value	2021-2022 sales growth	2020-2022 sales growth	2022 unit sales	2021-2022 unit sales growth	2020-2022 unit sales growth
Milk	€2.2 B	7%	19%	1.3 B	6%	20%
Meat	€2.0 B	3%	19%	846 M	1%	21%
Yoghurt	€515 M	-0.4%	8%	255 M	-3%	10%
Spreads	€247 M	13%	40%	140 M	4%	26%
Meals	€181 M	20%	79%	72 M	14%	71%
Ice cream	€174 M	8%	14%	57 M	8%	15%
Cheese	€165 M	4%	56%	61 M	4%	62%
Cream	€139 M	7%	7%	109 M	0%	1%
Dessert	€88 M	6%	27%	58 M	5%	40%
Seafood	€43 M	60%	326%	14 M	67%	343%
Total	€5.8 B	6%	21%	2.9 B	4%	21%

Plant-based foods in Belgium are a €163.5 million market.

The Belgian plant-based food retail market has remained mostly steady between 2020 and 2022, growing by 1% to €163.5 million.

Plant-based milk is Belgium's most developed category of plant-based products, although sales have declined since 2020. The value of plant-based meat sales continued to increase, growing 4% between 2020 and 2022. One of the least developed categories, but the fastest growing, is plant-based seafood.

Dive into the report to better understand the Belgian plant-based food retail market and how plant-based foods are growing in comparison to animal-based foods.

Addendum: In April 2023, we discovered some errors on the part of our data partner for the UK plant-based cheese, yoghurt, and dessert categories and the Poland plant-based cheese category. In this report, the executive summary, overall plant-based food country comparison charts, plant-based cheese country comparison charts, and plant-based yoghurt country comparison charts have been updated with the correct sales figures.

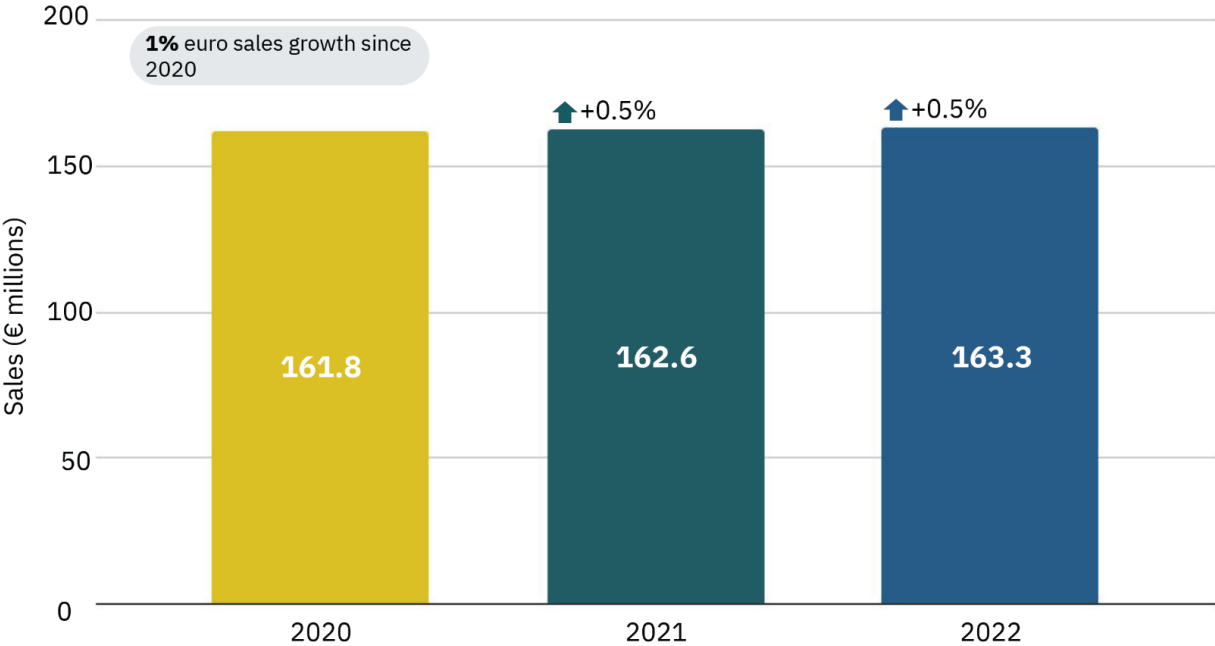
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Overall plant-based food market

Plant-based food sales in Belgium grew by 0.5% in 2022 to €163.3 million.

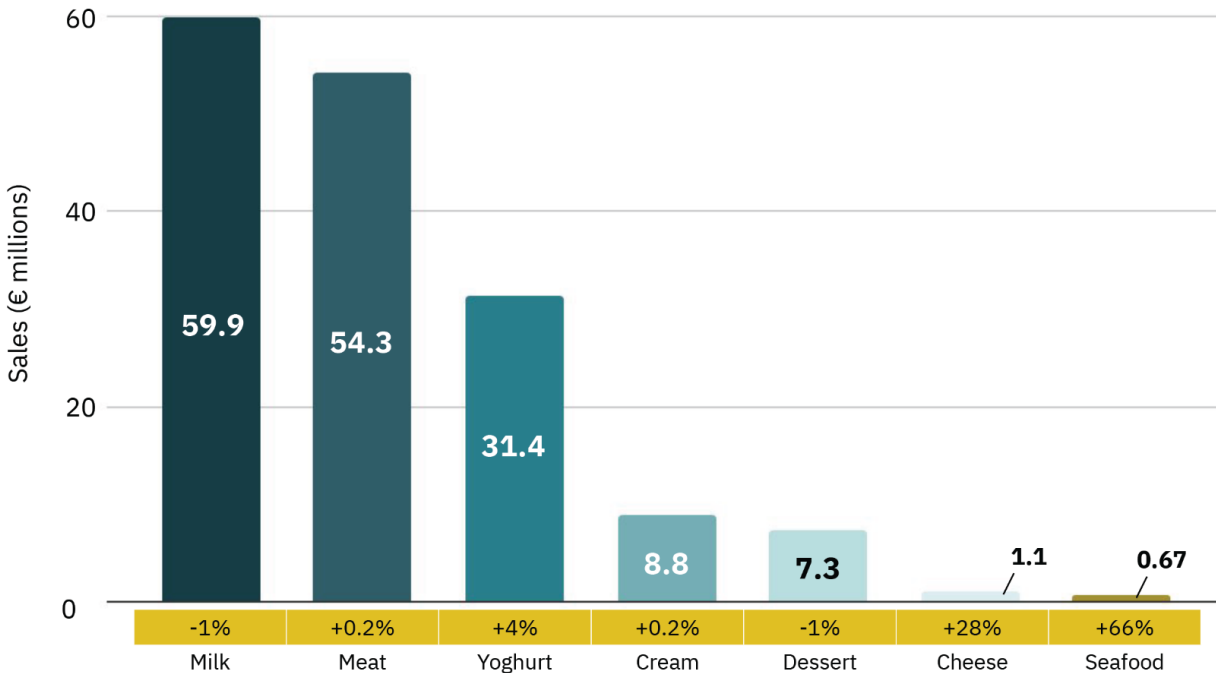
Belgium plant-based foods sales (in € millions), 2022



Categories

Plant-based categories are in various stages of development.

Belgium plant-based foods sales by category (in € millions), 2022



Key insights:

- **Plant-based milk is the most developed of all plant-based categories.** However, sales value declined by 1% and unit sales by 6% in 2022. This is in line with the animal-based milk category where unit sales also declined by 6%.
- **Plant-based meat sales continued to increase, totalling €54.3 million in 2022,** and growing by 4% between 2020 and 2022.
- **One of the least developed categories, but the fastest growing, is plant-based seafood.** At €670,000 in sales in 2022, plant-based seafood is still a very small category but growing rapidly, with more than 37% growth since 2020.

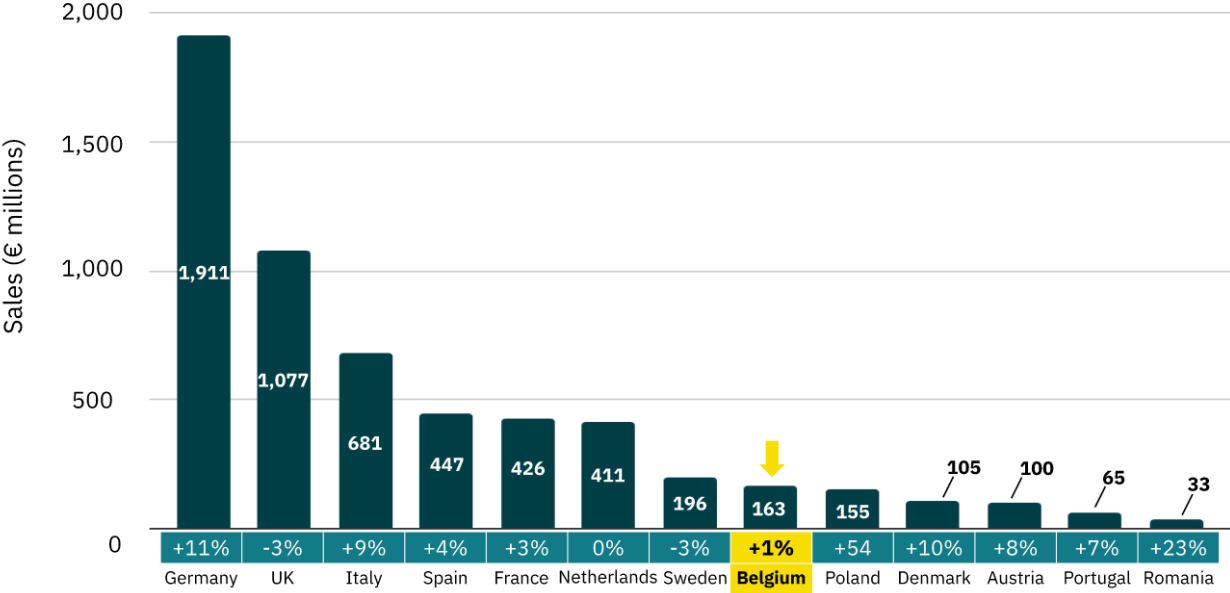
Belgium plant-based category sales summary, 2022

	2022 sales value	2021-2022 sales growth	2020-2022 sales growth	2022 unit sales	2021-2022 unit sales growth	2020-2022 unit sales growth
Milk	€59.9 M	-1%	-5%	27.6 M	-6%	-7%
Meat	€54.3 M	0.2%	4%	19.3 M	-1%	1%
Yoghurt	€31.4 M	4%	6%	13.1 M	-1%	1%
Cream	€8.8 M	0.2%	5%	2.7 M	-9%	4%
Dessert	€7.3 M	-1%	-9%	3.1 M	-18%	-25%
Cheese	€1.1 M	28%	-	0.4 M	30%	-
Seafood	€0.67 M	66%	37%	0.2 M	56%	33%
Total	€163.3 M	0,5%	1%	66.4 M	-4%	-3%

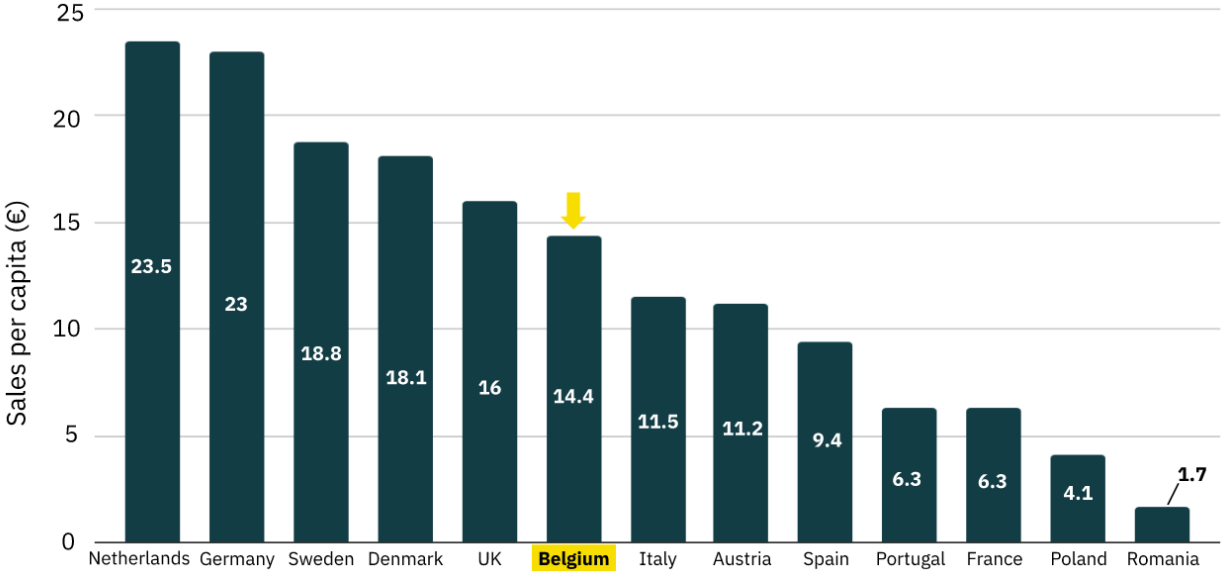
Country comparison

Belgium ranks eighth in terms of plant-based food sales value in Europe but sixth for average plant-based food spend per capita.

Europe-wide plant-based food sales by country (in € millions), 2022

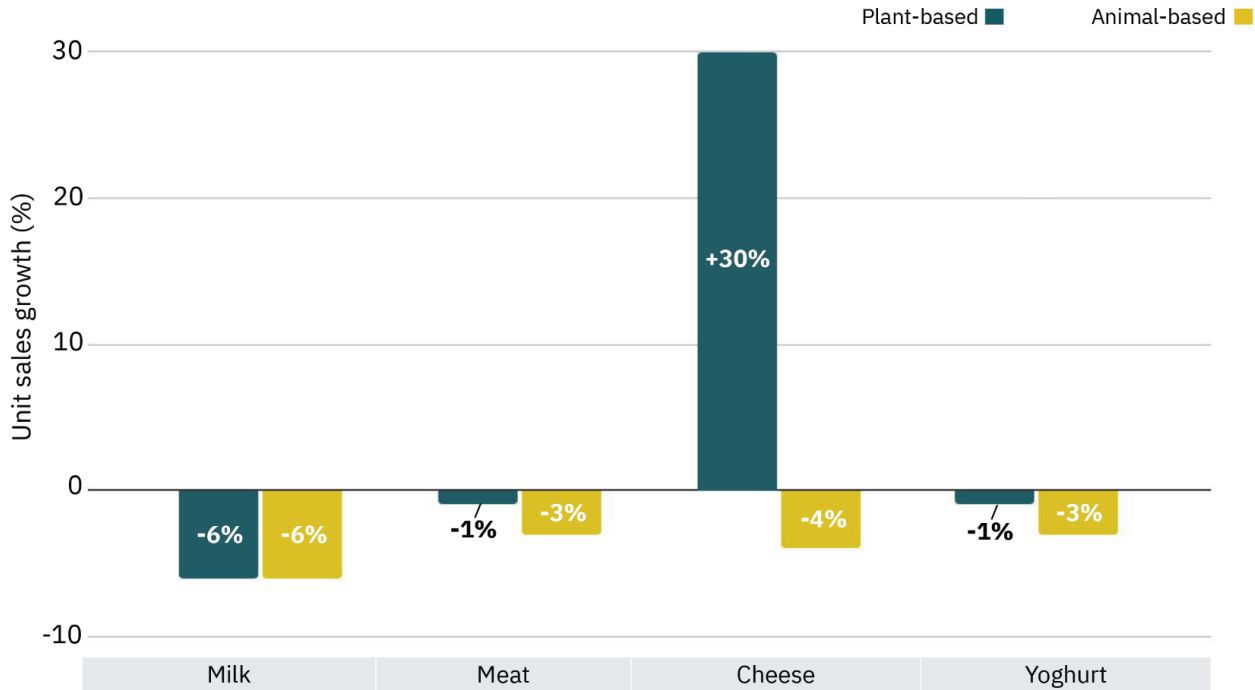


Europe-wide average plant-based food spend per country per capita (in euros), 2022



Comparison to animal-based foods

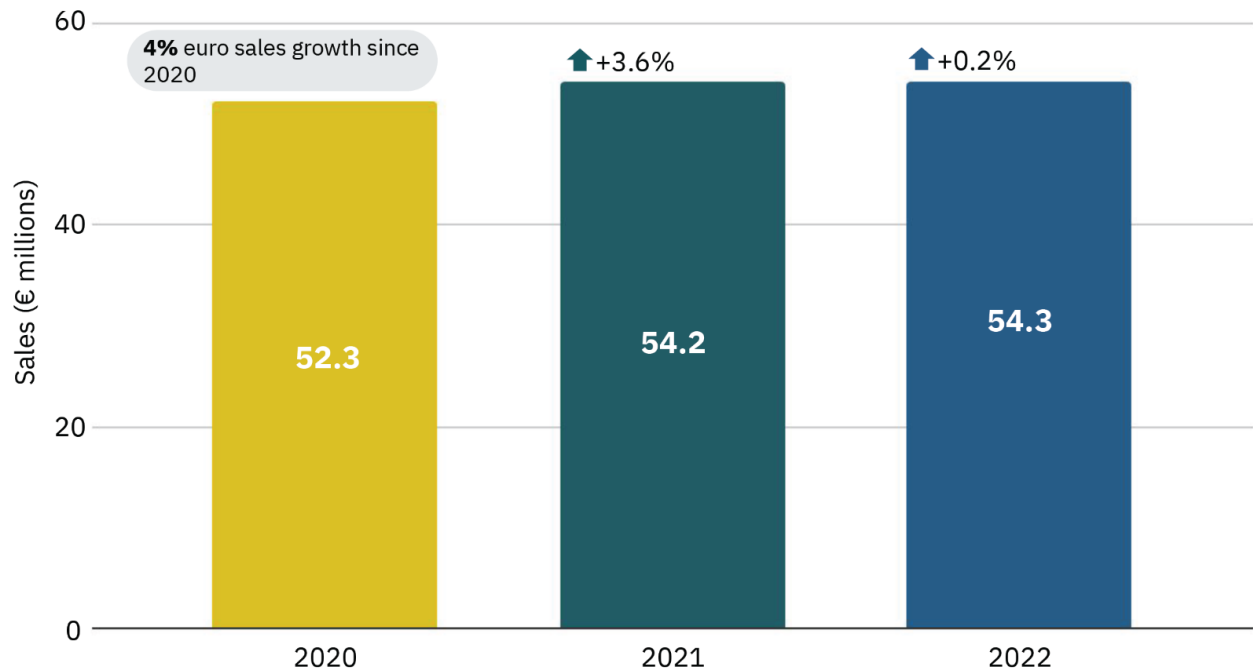
Belgium plant-based vs animal-based category unit sales growth, 2022



To compare the growth of plant-based versus animal-based categories, we compared unit sales (instead of sales by value) as it provides a more direct comparison. In 2022, plant-based cheese outpaced animal-based cheese, while both plant-based and animal-based milk, meat and yoghurt saw declining unit sales.

Plant-based meat¹

Belgium plant-based meat sales (in € millions), 2022



Key insights:

- The value of plant-based meat sales grew by 4% between 2020 and 2022, while total unit sales for plant-based meat went up by 1%.
- In comparison, pre-packaged conventional meat unit sales decreased by 5% between 2020 and 2022.
- In terms of average price per unit, the plant-based meat category has been less impacted by inflation and price increases in 2022. Plant-based meat prices increased by 1%, whereas pre-packaged conventional meat prices increased by 9%.
- In 2022, plant-based meat had a 19% market share of the total retail pre-packaged meat category.²

¹ The plant-based meat category includes both analogues (products that mimic the appearance and taste of animal-based meat) and non-analogues (e.g. vegetable-based patties).

² Nielsen only reports on pre-packaged animal-based meat sales, therefore the market share calculation is only for the pre-packaged meat category.

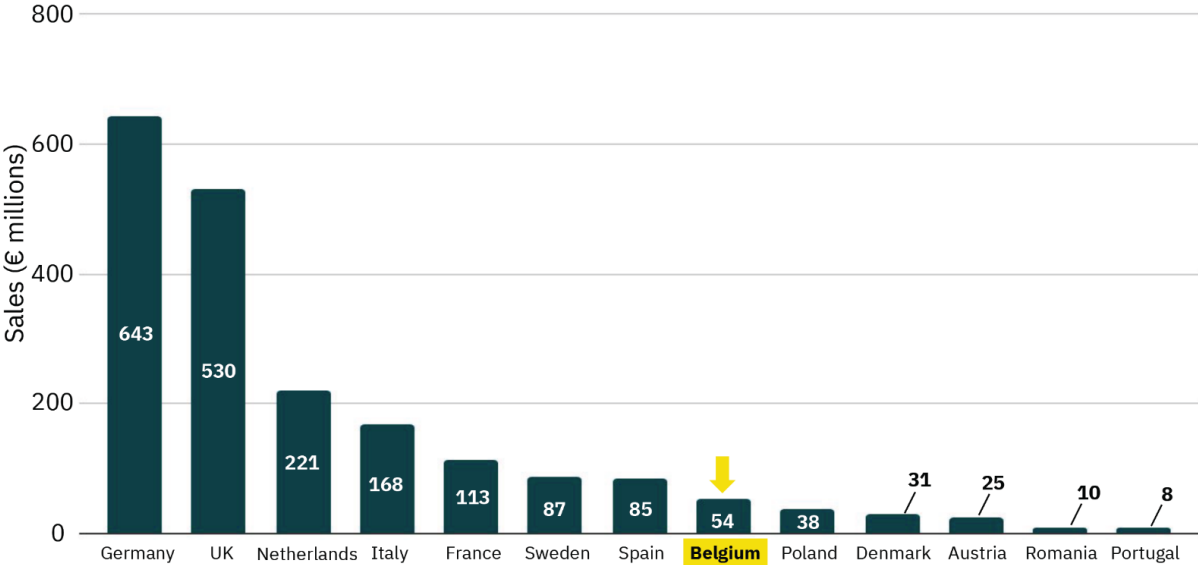
Segment insights:

- Refrigerated plant-based meat makes up the majority of the category by sales value in 2022, representing 89% of total plant-based meat sales, whereas frozen plant-based meat makes up 11%.
- The most popular plant-based meat formats are burgers, which make up 19% of sales by value, followed by pieces (12%) and schnitzel (10%). Meatballs, mince, and sausages each make up 6%. Whereas most formats experience growth in sales by value, burgers have declined over the past two years likely due to the introduction of new formats.

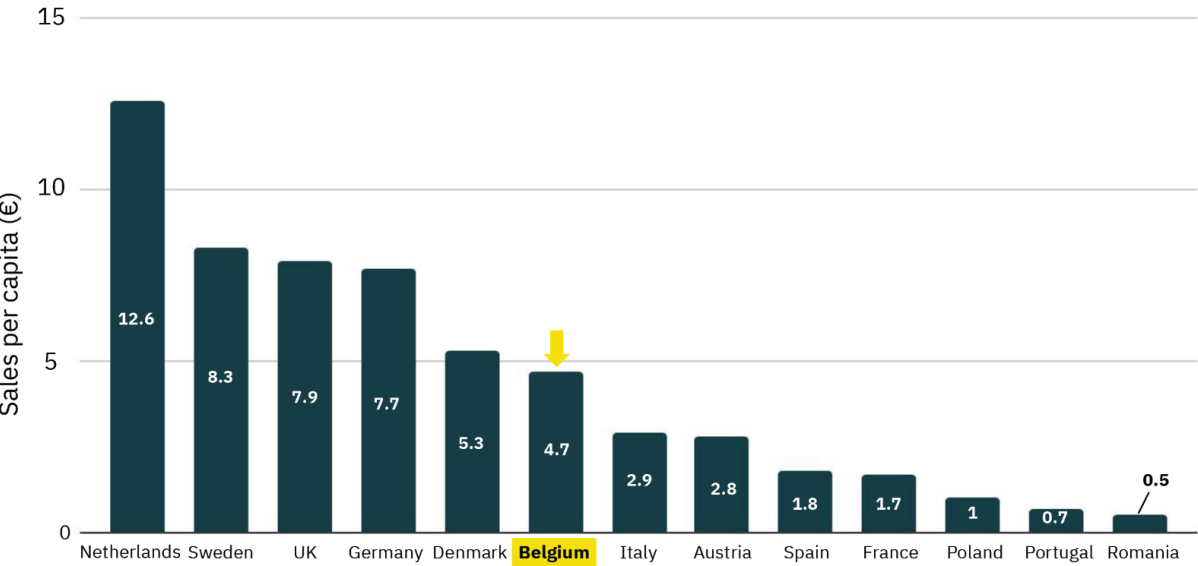
Country comparison

Belgium ranks eighth in terms of plant-based meat sales value in Europe but sixth for average plant-based meat spend per capita.

Europe-wide plant-based meat sales per country (in € millions), 2022

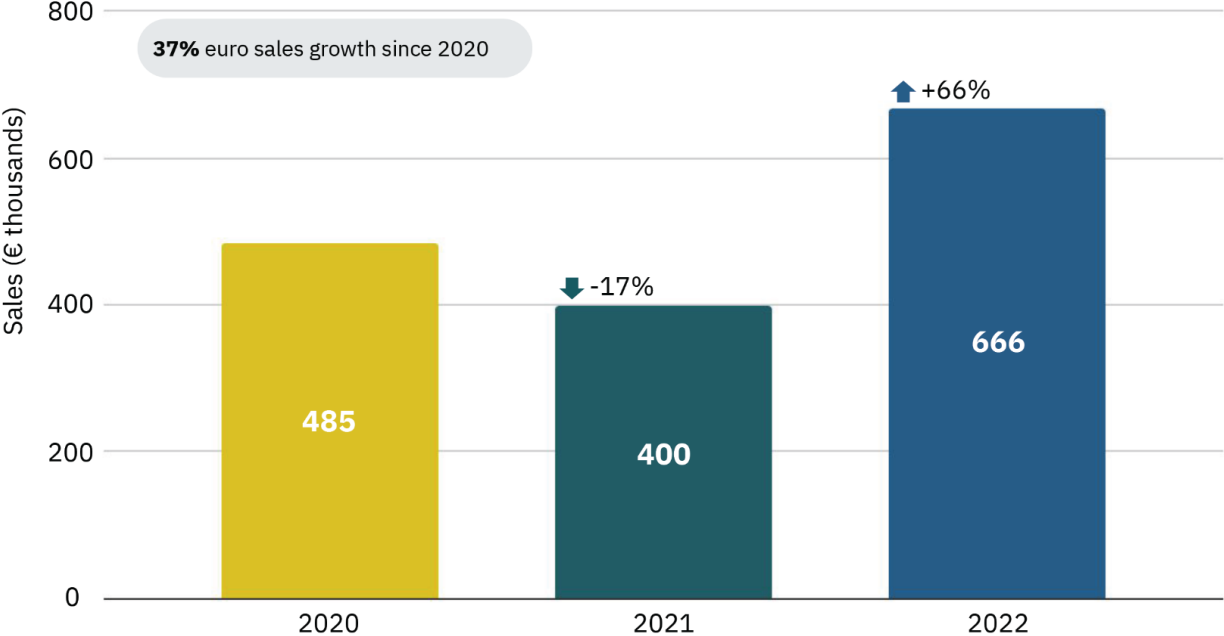


Europe-wide average plant-based meat spend per country per capita (in euros), 2022



Plant-based seafood

Belgium plant-based seafood sales (in € thousands), 2020-2022

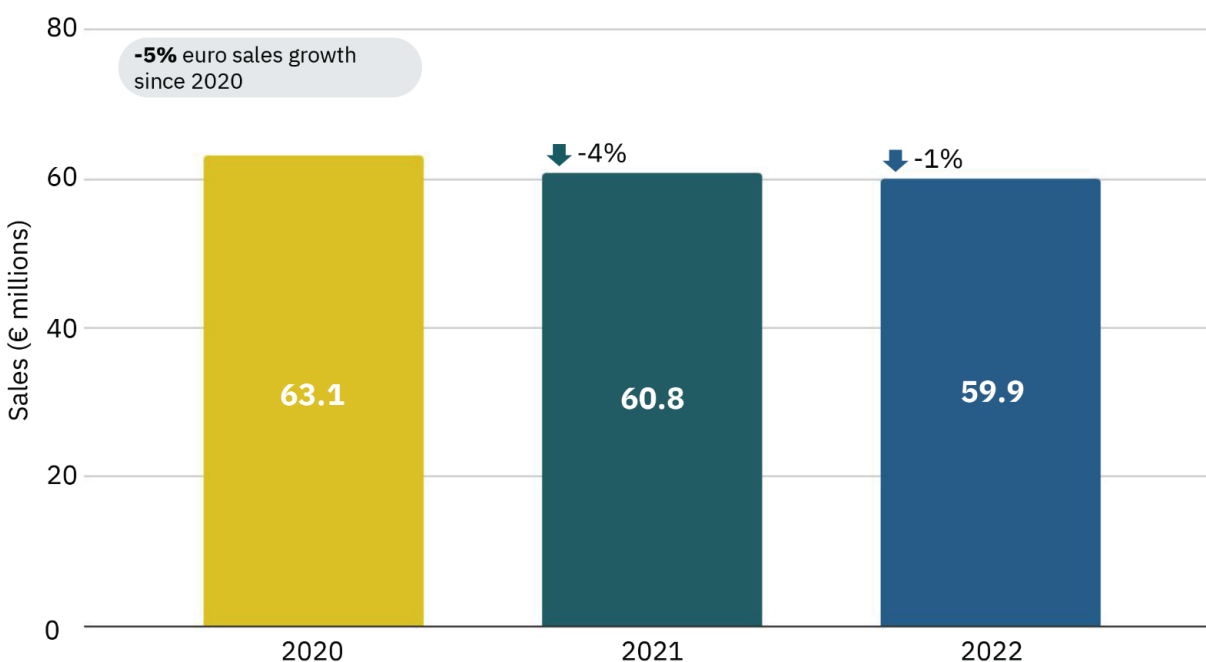


Key insights:

- The value of plant-based seafood sales grew 37% between 2020 and 2022.
- Plant-based seafood unit sales grew accordingly by 33% between 2020 and 2022.
- The average price per unit of plant-based seafood in 2022 increased by 7%.

Plant-based milk

Belgium plant-based milk sales (in € millions), 2020-2022



Key insights:

- The value of plant-based milk sales decreased by 5% between 2020 and 2022, and unit sales decreased by 7%.
- In comparison, conventional milk unit sales decreased by 9% between 2020 and 2022.
- In terms of average price per unit, the plant-based milk category has been less impacted by inflation and price increases in 2022. Plant-based milk prices increased by 5%, whereas conventional milk prices increased by 18%.
- In 2022, plant-based milk had a 13% market share of the total milk category.

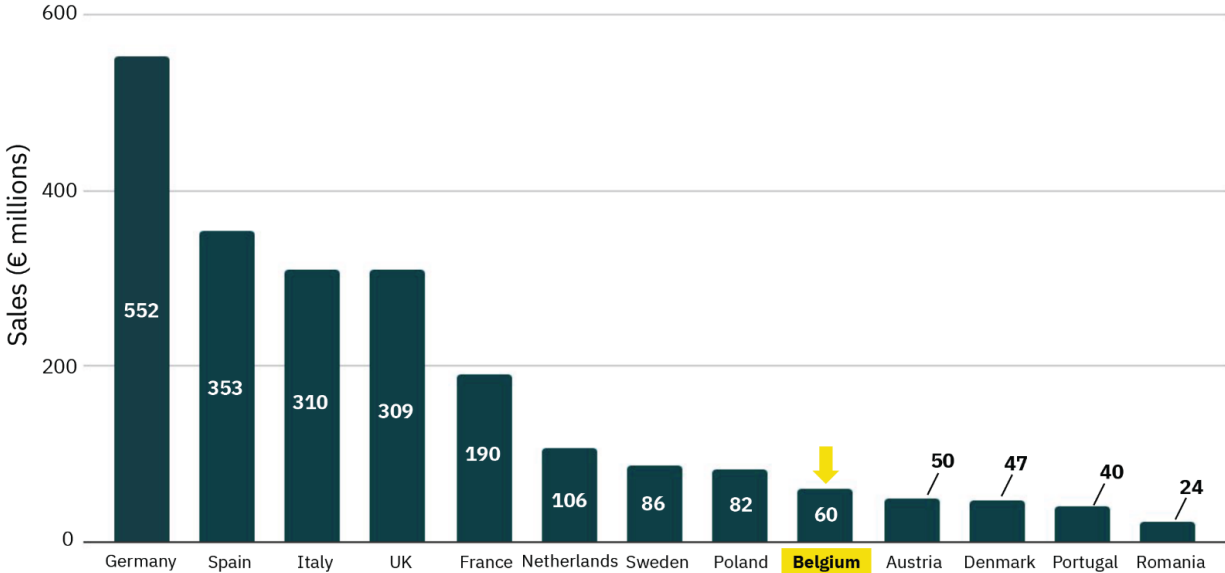
Segment insights:

- Soy milk is the category leader with 49% of category sales by value in 2022, followed by almond milk (21%) and oat milk (18%).
- However oat milk is the only segment seeing growth in terms of sales value (86% over the last two years), whereas both soy milk and almond milk sales values are decreasing (-12% and -11% respectively over the last two years).
- Plain milk makes up 67% of the total plant-based milk sales by value in 2022, while flavoured milk and other milk-based beverages comprise 33%.

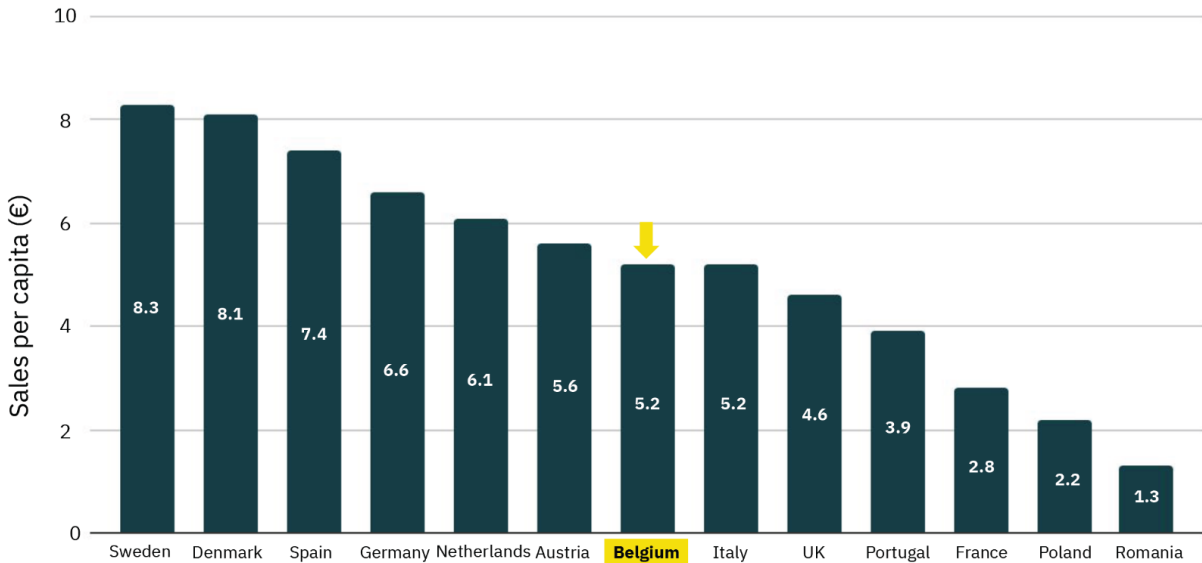
Country comparison

Belgium ranks ninth in terms of plant-based milk sales value in Europe but seventh for average plant-based milk spend per capita.

Europe-wide plant-based milk sales per country (in € millions), 2022

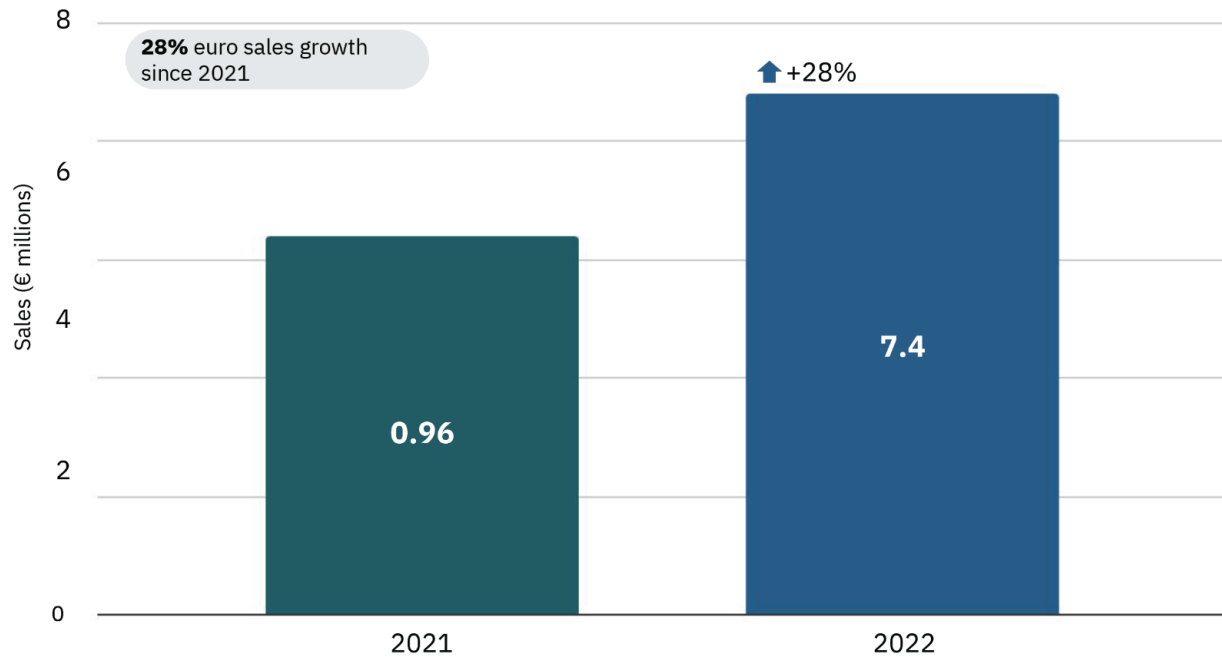


Europe-wide average plant-based milk spend per country per capita (in euros), 2022



Plant-based cheese

Belgium plant-based cheese sales (in € millions), 2021-2022³



Key insights:

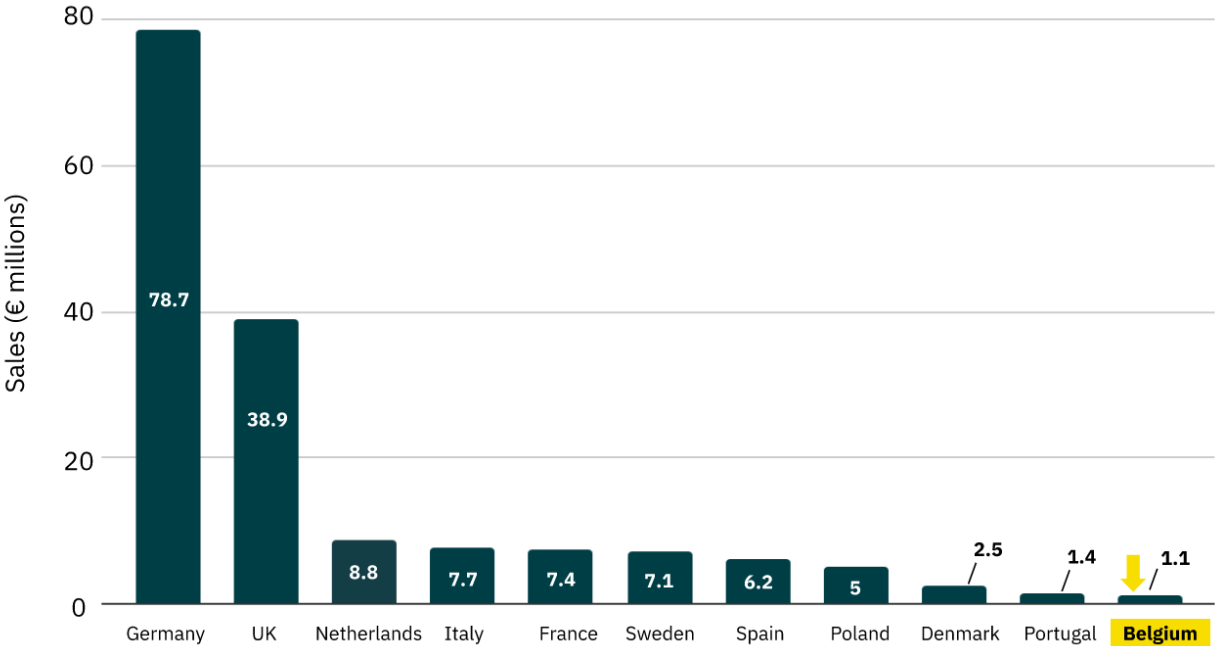
- The value of plant-based cheese sales grew 28% between 2021 and 2022, more than three times as much as conventional cheese.
- While plant-based cheese unit sales grew 30% between 2021 and 2022, conventional cheese unit sales decreased by 4%.
- In terms of average price per unit, the plant-based cheese category has been less impacted by inflation and price increases in 2022. Plant-based cheese prices actually decreased by 1%, whereas conventional cheese prices increased by 12%.
- In 2022, plant-based cheese had a 0.1% market share of the total cheese category.

³ There is no plant-based cheese data available for 2020.

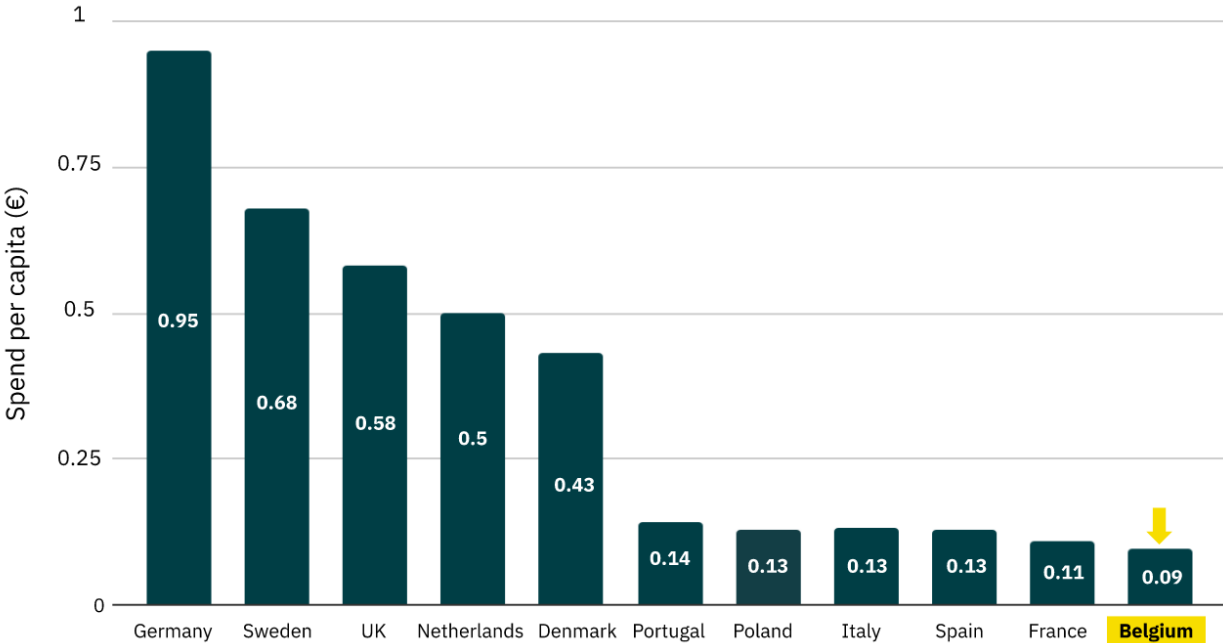
Country comparison

Belgium ranks last for both plant-based cheese sales value in Europe and for average plant-based cheese spend per capita.

Plant-based cheese sales per country (in € millions), 2022

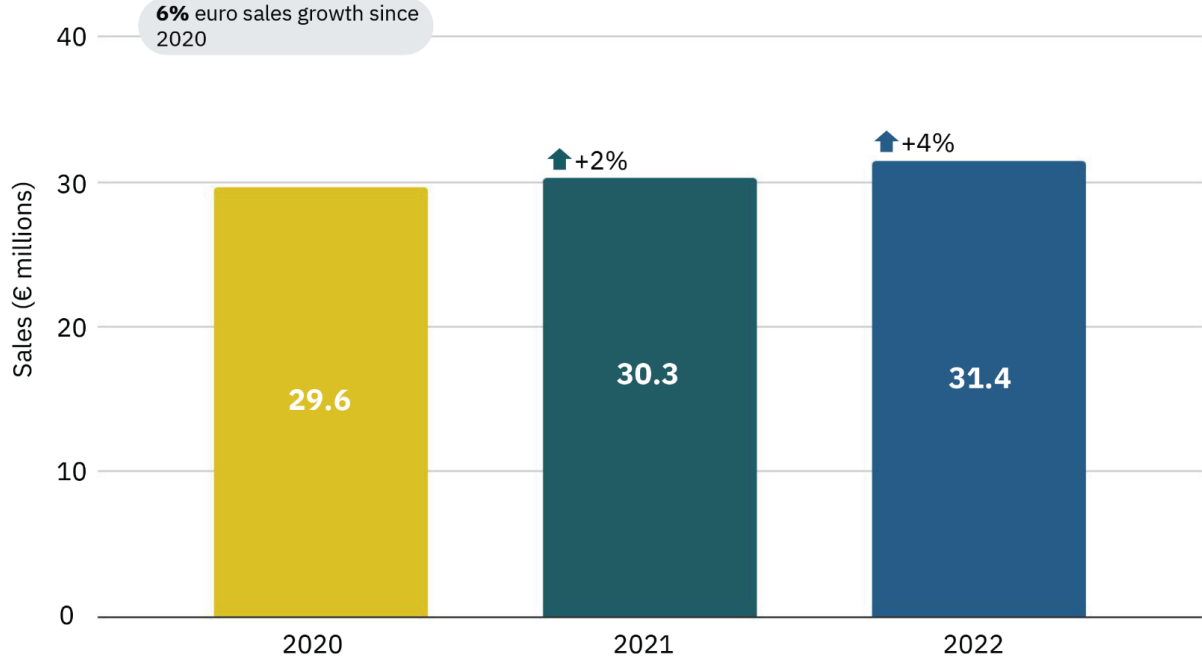


Average plant-based cheese spend per country per capita (in euros), 2022



Plant-based yoghurt

Belgium plant-based yoghurt sales (in € millions), 2020-2022



Key insights:

- The value of plant-based yoghurt sales grew 6% between 2020 and 2022, almost twice as much as conventional yoghurt.
- While plant-based yoghurt unit sales grew 1% between 2020 and 2022, conventional yoghurt unit sales decreased by 4%.
- The average price per unit of plant-based and conventional yoghurt in 2022 increased by 4% and 9% respectively.
- In 2022, plant-based yoghurt had a 7% market share of the total yoghurt category.

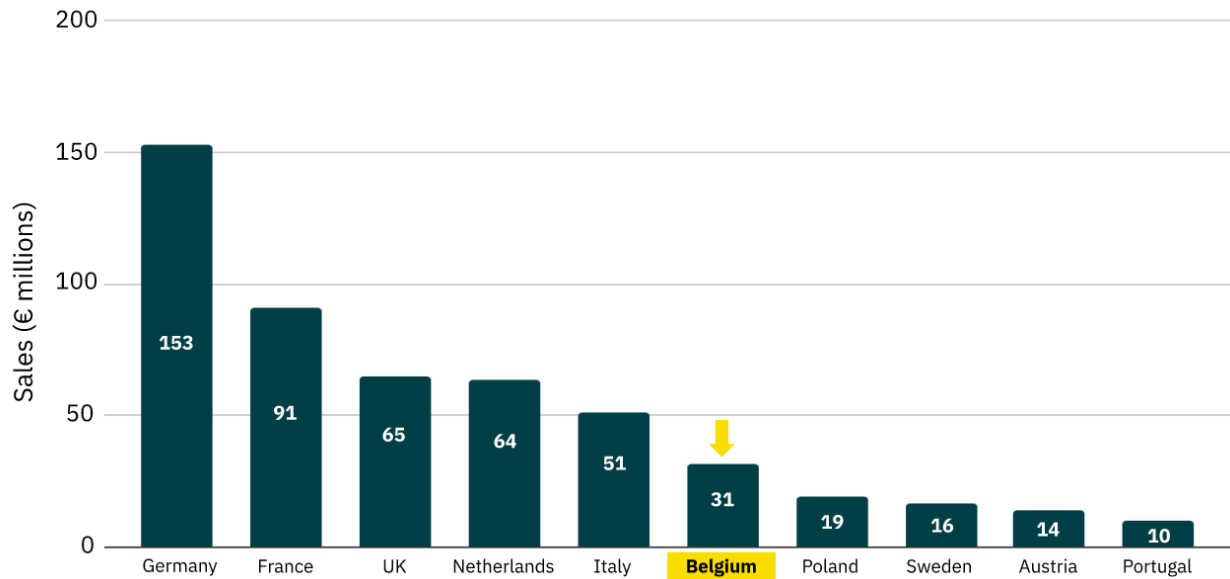
Segment insights:

- Soy yoghurt is the category leader with 90% of category sales by value in 2022, followed by coconut yoghurt (9%) and oat yoghurt (1%).
- Soy yoghurt and coconut yoghurt continued to see growth in terms of sales value (4% and 45% respectively between 2020 and 2022), whereas the value of oat yoghurt sales decreased (-18% between 2020 and 2022).

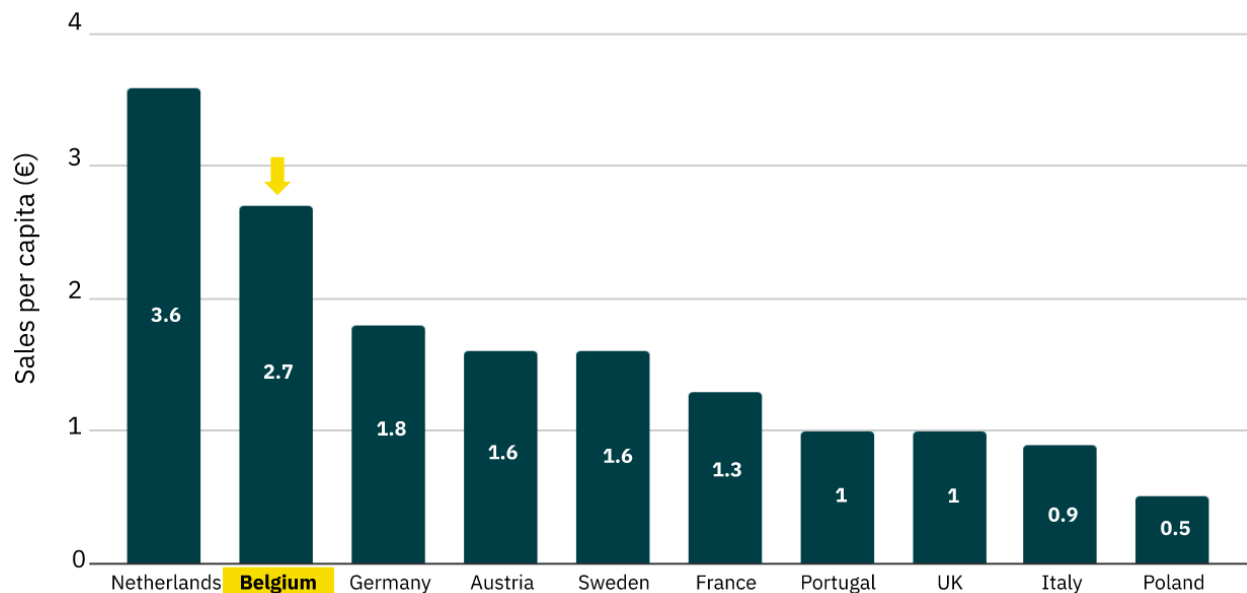
Country comparison

Belgium has the sixth highest plant-based yoghurt sales value in Europe but the second highest average plant-based yoghurt spend per capita.

Europe-wide plant-based yoghurt sales per country (in € millions), 2022

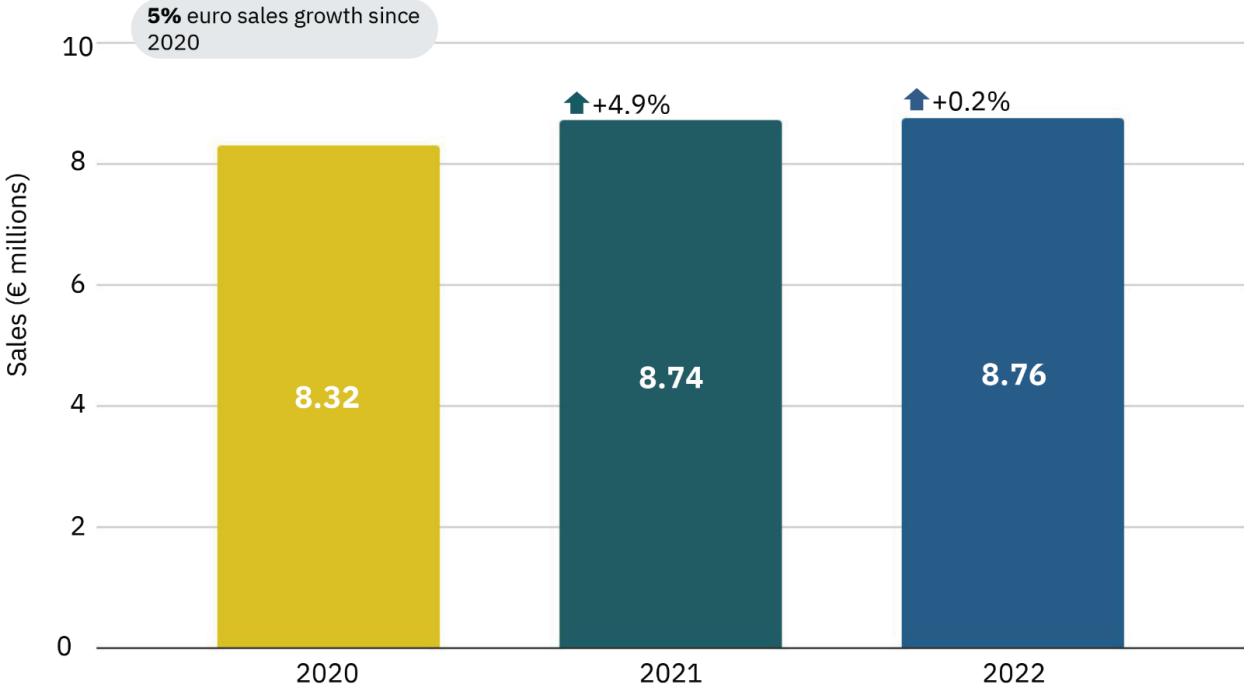


Europe-wide average plant-based yoghurt spend per country per capita (in euros), 2022



Plant-based cream

Belgium plant-based cream sales (in € millions), 2020-2022

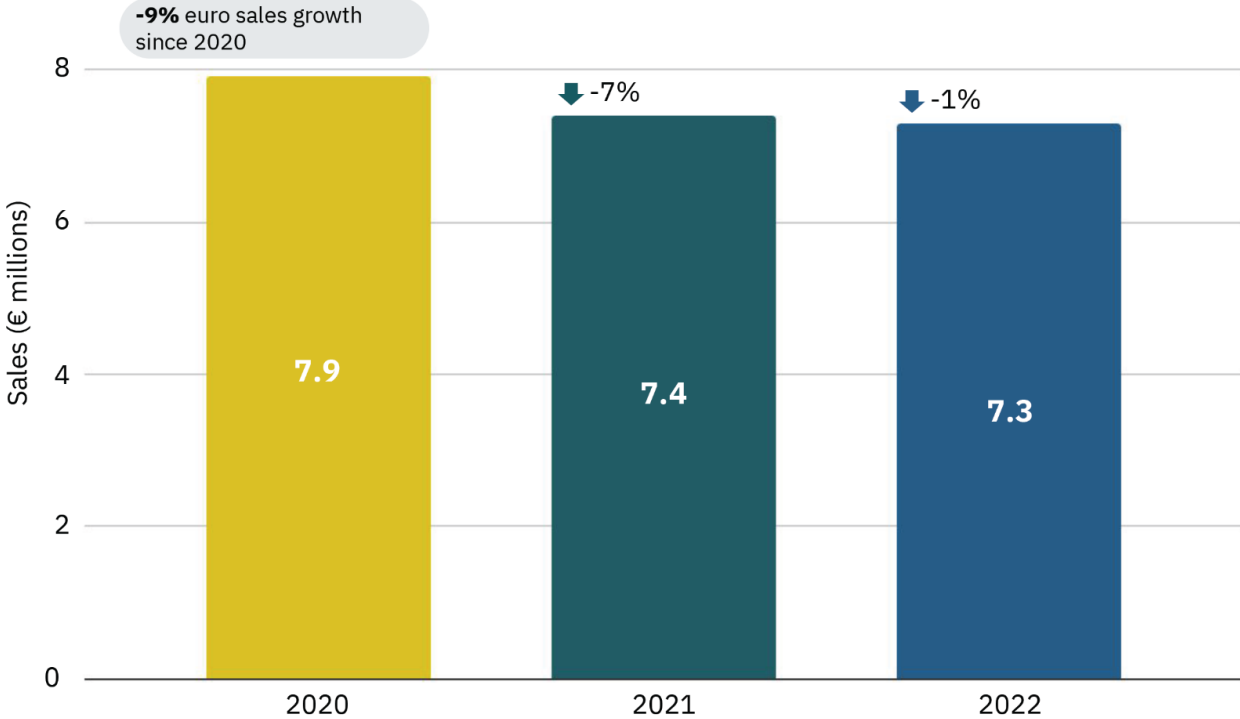


Key insights:

- The value of plant-based cream sales grew 5% between 2020 and 2022.
- Plant-based cream unit sales decreased by 4% between 2020 and 2022.
- The average price per unit of plant-based cream in 2022 increased by 10%.

Plant-based dessert⁴

Belgium plant-based dessert sales (in € millions), 2020-2022



Key insights:

- The value of plant-based dessert sales decreased by 9% between 2020 and 2022.
- Plant-based dessert unit sales decreased by 25% between 2020 and 2022.
- The average price per unit of plant-based desserts in 2022 increased by 21%.

⁴ The plant-based dessert category is primarily made up of pudding.

Closing remarks

“The plant-based food retail market in Europe has seen significant growth in recent years, driven by better plant-based products being brought to market. This is encouraging as the world works to address the many problems caused by industrial animal agriculture. However, to sustain this growth, companies must continue investing in product innovation to develop plant-based products that meet consumer expectations when it comes to the key drivers of taste, price, and convenience. The Good Food Institute’s [Advancing Solutions for Alternative Proteins database](#) is a great source to better understand key innovation priorities.”

Carlotte Lucas,
*Senior Corporate Engagement Manager at the
Good Food Institute Europe*



About the data

To size the Belgian retail market for plant-based foods, GFI Europe commissioned retail sales data from market research firm NielsenIQ. Analysis in this report is based on data reported by NielsenIQ for the total plant-based, total dairy products, and total pre-packed meat categories for the 52-week, 104-week, and 156-week periods ending 31 December 2022, for the Belgium market, according to GFI Europe product hierarchy. Therefore the data presented in this report may not align with standard NielsenIQ categories. Copyright © 2022, Nielsen Consumer, LLC.

About the Good Food Institute Europe

[The Good Food Institute Europe](#) is an international NGO helping to build a more sustainable, secure and just food system by transforming meat production.

We work with scientists, businesses and policymakers to advance plant-based and cultivated meat – making them delicious, affordable and accessible across Europe.

By making meat from plants and cultivating it from cells, we can reduce the environmental impact of our food system and feed more people with fewer resources. GFI Europe is powered by philanthropy.

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