

## Bread: from ordinary to good

Results and lessons from campaign “Bread, good story. With grain from Europe”



In the strategic endsession, the Dutch Bakery Centre and Institute Bread & Health presented the food trends and how they have been responded to within the campaign. Results and lessons were shared. How do we correctly talk about bread as a healthy, sustainable, protein-rich, plant-based and affordable product?

### Decrease in bread volume

Bread consumption has declined since 2009; from 61.7 kg of bread per person per year to 49 kg in 2017 (NL). And in Belgium, from 52.3 kg in 2009 to 39 kg per year in 2018. The first joint campaign in the Netherlands and Belgium, which started in 2018, had a positive effect; bread consumption increased for the first time and returned to 50.1 kg and 40 kg respectively in 2019. The corona years were disastrous for many sectors, including the bread sector. A difficult starting point for the second campaign, but bread consumption did increase again in 2022. Whether this will continue until 2023 remains to be seen, given the difficult economic and social circumstances.

### From ordinary to good

This declining bread volume is essentially the result of our perception; bread is too normal. The challenge of the campaign was to ensure that bread fits in a modern lifestyle and today's trends.

The image of bread is positive at the moment. Consumers see bread as an affordable package of nutrients that is also tasty, research shows. Whole grain bread is also increasingly being chosen, as this is the most commonly eaten type of bread in the Netherlands.

### A bookshelf with bread stories

With whole grain bread as hero, we have a promising product that fits in various nutritional trends such as healthy, nutritious, a source of protein and affordable. The campaign responded to this in various (video) stories during the campaign, such as the Success story, the Strong story and Rich story.

Sharing knowledge, changing attitudes and thus encouraging the intention to change behavior works. The research results show that the bread campaign has led to more knowledge about (whole grain) bread and that attitudes have also become more positive. In



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the Netherlands, we also see an increase in the share of whole grain bread, but not yet in Belgium. 56% of the Dutch people eat whole grain bread, in Flanders brown bread is in the lead and in Wallonia it is white bread. We see a difference in knowledge level that contributes to this.

### **Stay close to the core values of bread**

Bread provides a peace and is seen as simple, a basis, as the research results show. So it is important that we choose messages in our communication that confirm that familiar feeling. Be careful with complicated terms such as 'sustainability' or 'low environmental impact', is one of the lessons from the campaign. Consumers know that bread is sustainable, but it is no reason for them to buy it. Stay close to the core aspects of bread. You must continue to confirm the consumer and continue to respond to those basic aspects that the consumer already sees in bread. If you communicate about healthy, nutritious, affordable and tasty, the consumer also sees that as sustainable. The emotional click that a consumer has with a product and seeing the added value plays a major role, research shows.

### **Bread plays leading role in the future**

NBC predicts that health and sustainability will remain important themes and coexist as (often overlapping) trends. 22% of consumers already take sustainability into account when purchasing food. This percentage will rise rapidly in the coming years to more than 75% in 2027. For health, this percentage is already 82%.

It is not without reason that whole grains play a prominent role in 'the diet of the future' put together by the EAT-Lancet Commission. In addition, whole grains offer many proven health benefits. Insufficient intake of whole grains is even number one among diet-related causes of death in the Netherlands and Belgium. The urgency to put whole grains on the map, including among governments and policymakers, remains.

### **Dutch-Belgian cooperation challenging but successful**

The Netherlands, Flanders and Wallonia have very different cultures in terms of food and bread. It was therefore not obvious that the campaign would fit in well in all three regions. But this did happen. It forms a whole and fits together; consumers judge the campaign expressions as attractive, relevant and credible. It has had a clear impact on consumers. It confirms and strengthens the positive image.

41% of the Dutch, 30% of the Flemish and 32% of the Walloons have seen the campaign. These are good figures, but there is still room for improvement. The bread stories can therefore continue to be told and make an impact, because: "Repetition is key."

