

Meat department sales and engagement remained strong in 2022.

With \$87.1 billion in sales, 98.3% household penetration and 50 shopping trips per year, meat is the most powerful of the fresh departments. Sales grew 5.7% vs. 2021 and pound sales remained above pre-pandemic levels (IRI).

Shifts in channel choices are prompting changes in the meat/poultry dollar distribution.

Demographic and inflationary forces have resulted in a loss of share for traditional grocery from 42.8% of meat and poultry sales in 2019 to 40.3% in 2022 (IRI) — a shift of several billions of dollars. Supercenters, clubs and online outlets, all over indexing for Millennials, gained in share. Online meat sales grew on better conversion and more frequent orders.

A strong meat department reputation helps drive traffic for the entire store.

Price, location and assortment dominate the grocery store choice, with meat being the most influential department. Prices, quality and reputation decide where people buy most of their meat/poultry. A strong meat reputation is driven by freshness and quality of the product itself, a clean and well-stocked department with good prices and service excellence.

Shopping for meat/poultry is a balancing act between time and money.

Meat department prices rose 9.3% in 2022, below the rate of total food and beverages (+12.4%). Inflation is causing shoppers to research promotions more often and adapt what amount (78%), kind (76%), cut (74%) and brand (71%) of meat and poultry they purchase. Yet, value-added and fully-cooked meat/poultry also continue to thrive as 35% of shoppers say they often do not have as much time to prepare dinner as they would like.

Case-ready acceptance reaches a record high, yet full-service counters continue to be a perceptual plus.

70% of shoppers value the full-service counter, but usage is reserved for special cuts, amounts, occasions, asking for advice and premium beef cuts. 47% are interested in a meat associate roaming the meat case area for cut-to-order assistance or tips. A record 86% believe case-ready is as good or better as meat cut/packaged in-store.

Private brand popularity reaches its highest point since 2007.

The meat purchase decision is dominated by product quality/appearance together with price. Shoppers shifted their focus more toward the total package price and private brands. Altogether, manufacturer and private brands are now preferred by 63% of shoppers when buying fresh meat and poultry and by 70% for processed.

The thoughtful approach to meat purchases drives interest in transparency and information at the case.

Among the 62% weighing better-for-me/my family, leaner cuts are the most common strategy (39%), followed by reduced portion sizes (36%). Among shoppers weighing animal welfare, planet and people in their purchase decisions, between 26% and 34% are unsure whether raising and sourcing practices are good.

Meat and poultry are part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle, with cost being the chief driver for eating less.

71% of shoppers believe meat/poultry belong in the diet, yet 33% are trying to reduce their consumption. This is mostly due to the cost (52%) followed distantly by health concerns. Only 6% believe they will eliminate some or all meat/poultry, while most focus on portion control. Cultured meat continues to be met with caution while plant-based meat alternatives sales and engagement are down double digits. Blends grew in consumer interest.

Meals remain home-centric and 87% of home-prepared dinners contain a portion of meat or poultry.

Preparing meals at home has been a chief money-saving measure and home-prepared dinners return to 2018 levels. The hybrid meal, a mix of items cooked from scratch along with semi- and fully-prepared items, is the most popular. Boomers cook at home more often, but the inclusion of meat or poultry is very similar across generations.

Routine meals have plummeted as meal inspiration shifts toward social media.

YouTube has emerged as the lead social media platform for meal inspiration and cooking tips, now well ahead of Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. TikTok has become very powerful among Gen Z and Millennials. Air fryers, multi-function cookers and sous vide continue to make inroads for preparing meat/poultry.

Download all study resources at <https://www.meatconference.com/POM23> using password: 23POM&AMC

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