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10 **Title: The impact of plant-based non-dairy alternative milk on the dairy**
11 **industry: A review**

12

13 **Abstract**

14 Vegetarians have claimed and actively promoted the advantages of plant-based alternative
15 milks as the best option for human nutrition and health, compared to the natural dairy milk.
16 However, numerous scientific evidences and reports have demonstrated that the natural milk
17 possesses more beneficial nutrients and bioactive components than artificially manufactured plant-
18 derived milks. The biochemical and nutritional advantages and functionalities of natural dairy milk
19 cannot be replaced by man-made or crafted plant-based beverage products. On the other hand, the
20 tremendous increase in production and consumption of the plant-based alternative milks in recent
21 years has led a serious business downturn in traditional roles and stability of the dairy industry,
22 especially in the major dairy producing Western countries. Although plant-based milk alternatives
23 may have some benefits on nutrition and health of certain consumers, the plant-derived alternative
24 milks may not overshadow the true values of natural milk. Milk is not a high fat and high
25 cholesterol food as animal meat products. Unlike plant-based alternative milks, natural milk
26 contains many bioactive as well as antiappetizing peptides, which can reduce body weight. It has
27 proven that taking low-fat, cultured and lactase treated milk and dairy products with other
28 diversified nutritionally balanced diets have been shown to be healthier dietary option than plant-
29 based milk/foods alone.

30

31 **Key words:** Plant-based, non-dairy milk, consumption, economic impact, dairy industry

32

33 **Introduction**

34 Owing to the current sudden emergence of COVID-19, all economy of the globe seems to
35 be severely damaged and upside down with no signs of foreseeable fast recovery for many
36 segments of businesses around the world including the dairy industry. Even before the COVID-
37 19 worldwide pandemic crisis, the dairy industry in recent years has experienced the
38 unprecedented troublesome tidal wave that caused a great threat on its healthy survival of the
39 traditional dairy business. The recent surge of market share of the plant-based non-dairy
40 alternatives into the beverage industry has seriously dampened the prospect of steady growth of
41 the traditional milk and dairy industry. This continuous trend of tremendous economic losses or
42 business downfalls of the dairy industry has placed many current dairy operations and farmers on
43 the verge of bankruptcy of their businesses, including many large dairy corporations in the US
44 and other Western countries.

45 The current trend of consumer inclination towards a healthy lifestyle in
46 developed countries has turned tables for the dairy industry. The demand for plant-
47 based milk alternatives has been a rising trend especially among the vegetarians. The plant-based
48 milk products can also serve as an inexpensive alternative option to economically underserved
49 populations of developing countries as well as those people living in the regions where cow's
50 milk supply is insufficient (Sosulski et al., 1978; Sethi et al., 2016; Park, 2018). Worldwide,
51 plant-based non-dairy milk alternatives such as soy, almond and oat milk are the fast growing
52 segment in newer food product development category of specialty beverage. Transparency
53 Market Research (TMR) reported that the plant-based milk market was valued at
54 approximately US\$14 Billion in 2019, and forecasted approximately 8% of its annual growth
55 during the period of 2019-2029 (TMR, 2019).

56 **The recent trend of beverage industry**

57 The increasing shift in consumer preference for plant-based food products in daily diets
58 may drive up the market of plant-based alternative milk. The plant-based milk market also has
59 been promoted by active advocates of restoration of veganism, where food manufacturers are
60 opting for alternative sources of plant-based materials. On the other hand, the recent trend of
61 tremendous economic losses or business downfalls of the dairy industry has been largely
62 attributed to the aggressive promotion or scientifically uncertain claims by vegetarian or vegan
63 people against the true values of the natural dairy milk. This resultant outcome of increased
64 growth in the plant-based milk business sector has driven the dairy industry into serious revenue
65 losses in milk sales, which in turn has driven the dairy industry and dairy farmers into serious
66 drawbacks and pressures on the survival of the dairy operations in the US and Western world.

67 Vegans and vegetarians have actively promoted the advantages of plant-based alternative
68 beverages over natural dairy milk, which include better health for preventing lactose intolerance
69 and cow's milk allergy due to the benefits of lactose free, cholesterol free and low calorie foods
70 or to reduce dairy impact on the planet. However, most of these claims are missing the other side
71 of scientific information, and also impartial and missing the true values of natural milk in human
72 health and nutritional benefits. Although the plant derived milk alternatives contain some
73 functional active components with health promoting properties which attract health conscious
74 consumers (Sethi et al., 2016) as the vegan activists have promoted, the plant derived products
75 are lacking in various nutritional components, such as immunoglobulins and many bioactive
76 constituents in natural milk. Furthermore, the plant-based alternatives cannot replace the quality
77 characteristics of cow's milk in terms of taste, flavor, appearance, stability, rheology and
78 nutritional values. The purposes of this article are to review: (i) the recent trend of increasing

79 consumption of plant-based milk alternatives, (ii) the serious negative impact of plant-based
80 alternative milks on the business sustainability of the dairy industry, and (iii) the misconception
81 of plant derived milk products over the natural dairy milk on human nutrition and wellbeing.

82

83 **Missing points on the natural milk by vegan people**

84 The vegans and vegetarian activist groups believe that all plant-based milks are preferred
85 over cow's milk by consumers who are lactose intolerant or allergic to cow milk proteins, since
86 the common benefits of plant-based alternative milks are lactose free, cholesterol free and low in
87 calories (Valencia-Flores et., 2013). These claims appear to be reasonable and have good points,
88 while these claims are applicable only for small percentage of milk and dairy consumers
89 especially in most of developed countries. In addition, there are some major points are missing
90 on the true values of the natural dairy milk by the vegans' claims, such as many types of
91 bioactive components, milk enzymes, bioactive peptides, immunoglobulins, oligosaccharides,
92 organic acids, lactoferrin, nucleotides, milk vitamins and minerals, and so on. These partial lists
93 of compounds in natural milk do not exist in plant-based alternative milk products.

94 Considering the overwhelming advantages of natural milk in human nutrition and
95 wellbeing, those problems raised by the vegans cannot or should not prevent the consumers
96 drinking the dairy milk. In fact, the dietary issues raised by the vegans can be easily corrected by
97 taking balanced and diversified diets with fermented or lactate added milk and dairy products as
98 the major parts of the diets (Korhonen and Pihlanto, 2007; Park et al., 2007; Park, 2009; Ibrahim
99 and Gyawali, 2013). Vegan activists promote the advantages of plant-derived foods and
100 denounce or ignore the major benefits of natural dairy milk, and thereby the advantages and
101 nutritional importance of natural milk may be overshadowed by their claims. Although the plant-

102 based alternative milks have some advantages over natural milk, those concerns raised by vegans
103 on natural milk can be overcome: Lactose intolerance may be resolved by taking lactase treated
104 or cultured milk products such as yogurts, cow milk allergy can be alleviated by replacing A2
105 milk or less allergenic one such as goat milk, and cholesterol levels of natural milks (cow milk)
106 are not significantly high to be detrimental to human health, and also milk cholesterol level is
107 substantially low compared to those of animal meat products.

108 Furthermore, vegan activists claim that plant-based milk alternatives are the best
109 nutritious, healthy and superior choice of milk for human consumption for nutrition, health and
110 wellbeing of humanity, and refuse to take the natural dairy milk. Actually, the fact of the matter
111 is that the statements in <https://vegangreenplanet.com/all/> made by the vegan people (Dairy is not
112 healthy; The China study; Vegan green planet) appear to be misleading and contain scientifically
113 uncertain information, which require solid scientific and clinical verifications. In addition, the
114 vegans claim that plant-based milk products are nutritionally superior to the natural dairy milk
115 because the plant alternative products are non-allergenic to consumers. On the other hand, quite a
116 few people have allergy against plant derived foods such as soy and peanuts containing products.

117 Contrary to the vegans' probable biased and negative views, the natural dairy milk is the
118 best choice of its kind, and plant-based alternatives cannot replace the superior nutritional and
119 health values of the natural milk in human consumption. Plant-based alternative non-dairy milk
120 products do not have immunoglobulins and cannot provide the newborn calf (or human infant)
121 with the essential immunity that receive from the dam's (mother) colostrum of dairy species.
122 Proteins contained in colostrum and normal milk are known to exert a wide range of nutritional,
123 functional and biological activities (Pihlanto and Korhonen, 2003; Zimecki and Kruzel, 2007).
124 Because cow milk sets the bar—taste, texture, and nutrition—that all dairy-free plant alternatives

125 attempt to let the dairy down or destroy the true values. Much of the nutrition in dairy milk
126 comes naturally, whereas the plant-based alternative milks are artificially fabricated and not
127 natural products (Sethi et al., 2016; Park, 2018).

128 Although numerous types of innovative food beverages from plant sources are being
129 exploited for cow milk alternative, many of these faces certain types of technological issues;
130 either related to processing or preservation (Sethi et al., 2016). In manufacture of plant-based
131 non-dairy beverages, the quality plant-based milk product must be comparable to the
132 composition and quality characteristics of cow's milk in regard to taste, flavor, appearance,
133 stability, rheology and nutritive value (Lee and Beuchat, 1992; Cruz et al. 2007; Sethi et al.,
134 2016; Park, 2018). The technical issues involved in production of plant-base milk beverages are
135 the disintegration of the plant ingredients, attaining the homogeneity of the particle size and its
136 composition as close as possible to those in bovine milk. The quality of the final manufactured
137 plant-based beverage alternatives undoubtedly depends on the quality of the raw material, the
138 disintegration method, extraction, particle size, the rheological stability of the manufactured
139 product and storage conditions of the products (Galvez et al. 1990; Zahra et el. 2014).

140 Majority of these milk alternatives lack nutritional balance when compared to bovine
141 milk. However, they contain functionally active components with health promoting properties
142 which attracts health conscious consumers (Sethi et al., 2016; Park, 2018). Anyway, plant
143 sources such as nuts, cereals and legumes, are accepted as functional food and nutraceuticals due
144 to presence of health promoting components such as dietary fibers, minerals, vitamins and
145 antioxidants (Das et al., 2012).

146
147 **The authentic concept of “milk”**

148 Milk is the lacteal secretion from the mammary glands of mammals. This is the reason
149 why dairy scientists do not recognize or call other alternative man-made fluid foods as a milk,
150 such as plant-derived beverages. The true milk is the natural secretion from the mammary glands
151 of mammals, and milk is known as nature's most complete food, and dairy products are
152 considered the most nutritious foods (Park, 2009; Park and Haenlein, 2017).

153 No one can deny that a human fabricated food would be better than the natural original
154 provision. The man-made plant-based milks cannot be the best, nor replaceable and comparable
155 to the natural dairy milk in taste, flavor, appearance, stability, rheology, and nutrition. In biblical
156 point of view in the beginning of the human history, milk was provided to human only from
157 goats and/or cows, not from plant materials. Nevertheless, vegetarians advocate the plant-based
158 alternative milks are the best choice of beverage milk over the natural dairy milk. This can
159 seriously mislead the average consumers in purchasing option of milk products, and also can
160 result in unequivocal severe damages to the traditional business sustainability and profitability of
161 the dairy industry and its producers.

162

163 **Advantages and true values of cow and other dairy species milks**

164 Many advantages of dairy milk do not exist in the plant derived alternative milk products.
165 Plant-based non-dairy milk products do not have immunoglobulins, and the newborn infants can
166 only receive the essential immunity from the mother's milk, not from plant-based products.
167 Proteins found in colostrum and normal milk are known to possess a wide range of nutritional,
168 functional and biological functionalities (Pihlanto and Korhonen, 2003; Zimecki and Kruzel,
169 2007). Immunoglobulins (Ig) in colostrum of all lactating species possess the biological function

170 of antibodies to provide passive immunity against invading pathogens, especially essential in
171 newborn infants, while the plant-based non-dairy alternative milks do not have such Ig proteins.

172 Natural milk also contains various bioactive compounds, which are not found in plant-
173 based alternative milk products. These milk bioactive constituents in the dairy milk include:
174 caseins (α -, β -, κ -, γ -), whey proteins (α -lactalbumin, β -lactoglobulin, lactoferrin,
175 immunoglobulins, glycomacropeptide), milk enzymes (lactoperoxidase, lysozyme), bioactive
176 lipids [conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), phospholipids, cholesterol and minor lipids], bioactive
177 carbohydrates (lactose, lactose derivatives, oligosaccharides), other minor bioactives (growth
178 factors, cytokines, milk hormones, nucleosides and nucleotides, polyamines, organic acids),
179 bioactive minerals and vitamins, etc. (Korhonen, 2009; Park, 2009).

180 The multi-functional properties of major milk proteins and peptides have been
181 characterized and proven for several decades (Mulvihill, and Ennis, 2003; Park, 2009). As shown
182 in Table 1, cow and other dairy species milk and colostrum contain a variety of bioactive
183 proteins and constituents that are not present in plant-based milk products. In addition, many
184 bioactive peptides are released after digestion, hydrolysis and fermentation of milk proteins.
185 Various bioactive peptides exhibit different types of physiological functions in the human body
186 such as gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, endocrine, immune, and nervous systems.
187 Functionalities of these peptides include: antihypertensive, antimicrobial, antioxidative,
188 antithrombotic, cytomodulatory, immunomodulatory and opioid-like activities (FitzGerald and
189 Meisel, 2003; Mulvihill, and Ennis, 2003; Pan et al., 2006; Korhonen, 2009; Park, 2009).

190 Dairy milk, especially goat milk, contains high levels of short and medium chain fatty
191 acids (MCT), which are not in the plant-based milk products. These short chain and MCT are
192 important for human nutrition and wellbeing, since MCTs: (a) are more easily digestible than

193 long chain fatty acids (Jenness, 1980; Park, 1994; 2006; Park and Haenlein, 2017), (b) play
194 beneficial roles on cholesterol metabolism including hypocholesterolic action, inhibition of
195 cholesterol deposition and dissolution of cholesterol in gallstones (Haenlein, 1992; Park, 2006),
196 (c) have the unique metabolic function by providing energy to growing children, and (d) can be
197 used for treatment of lipid malabsorption patients suffering from steatorrhea, chyluria,
198 hyperlipoproteinemia, and in case of intestinal resorption, coronary bypass, childhood epilepsy,
199 premature infant feeding, cystic fibrosis and gallstones (Greenberger and Skillman, 1969;
200 Tantibhedhyangkul and Hashim, 1975; Haenlein, 1992; Park, 1994; Park and Haenlein, 2017).
201 MCTs also may help reduce appetite, assist with weight loss and improve blood cholesterol
202 levels more than other fats (Han et al., 2007). Coconut oil contains antioxidant (vitamin E) and
203 high levels of MCTs, especially in lauric acid, which has bioactive functions including boosting
204 immune system and maintaining the elasticity of the blood vessels (Han et al., 2007; Sethi et al.,
205 2016). However, coconut oil also contains saturated fats, such as palmitic and stearic acids.

206 The lipid component of milk fat globule membrane (MFGM) is rich in phospholipids,
207 glycosphingolipids, and cholesterol. Approximately 30% of the total lipid weight of MFGM is
208 made up of phospholipids. The phospholipids have the three most prominent components as
209 sphingomyelin (SM), phosphatidylcholine (PC), and phosphatidylethanolamine (PE), which
210 represent up to 85% of total phospholipids (Kanno, 1990). Phospholipids and sphingolipids play
211 central roles in cerebral neurogenesis and migration during fetal development, as well as
212 promoting neuronal growth, differentiation, and synaptogenesis during the first year of life
213 (Vance et al., 2000; Hirabayashi et al., 2008). These reports prove that natural milk exhibits a
214 variety of therapeutic functions in human nutrition and metabolism, which are not present in

215 plant-based milk. These facts reveal that the claims of vegans on superiority of plant-based
216 products and negative views on natural dairy milk are not convincing.

217 It has been reported that consumption of dairy milk also can prevent osteoporosis,
218 cancers, dental caries and weight gain by antiappetizing peptide. High calcium in milk is
219 important for development and maintenance of skeletal integrity and prevention of osteoporosis
220 (Schaafsma et al., 1987), which is especially important for the elderly in maintaining bone
221 strength. The role of calcium as a protective factor in the etiology of colon cancer has been well
222 documented (Sorenson et al., 1988). Calcium is also believed to be associated with binding and
223 removal of carcinogenic agents (bile salts, etc) along the gastrointestinal tract (Regester et al.,
224 1997). A low calcium intake is related to hypertension, and calcium supplementation reduced
225 blood pressure in hypertensive patients (Grobbee and Hofman, 1986). The milk lactose has been
226 shown to prevent of dental caries (Shetty et al., 2011). Milk has been shown to have
227 antiappetizing and weight loss effects by high calcium and antiappetizing peptide (Zhang and
228 Beynen, 1993).

229 Natural milk also has polyamines and nucleotides/nucleosides. polyamines in milk, such
230 as putrescine, spermidine and spermine, exhibit a wide range of bio-functionality and possible
231 therapeutic values (Michaelidou, 2008). Polyamines are considered as indispensable in various
232 physiological and metabolic processes of cell differentiation and growth (Loser, 2000;
233 Michaelidou, 2008; Park and Haenlein, 2017). The roles of these polyamines are closely related
234 to stabilization of the negative charges of DNA and of the chromatin structure, the regulation of
235 several transcriptional factors and protein synthesis (Larqué et al., 2007). Nucleotides and
236 nucleosides are nonprotein components of minor milk constituents, while they can be considered
237 as therapeutic agents, since they play significant biological roles on apoptosis by acting as

238 anticarcinogens against malignant cells (Schlimme et al., 2000; Korhonen and Pihlanto, 2007;
239 Michaelidou, 2008).

240

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- 350

351 Table 1. Major bioactive proteins components and their biological activities of cow milk and colostrum.

Protein	Concentration (g/L)		Molecular weight Daltons	Biological activity
	Colostrum	Milk		
Caseins (α_{s1} , α_{s2} , β and κ)	26	28	14.000-22.000	Ion carrier (Ca, PO ₄ , Fe, Zn, Cu), precursor for bioactive peptides immunomodulatory, anticarcinogenic
β -lactoglobulin	8.0	3.3	18.400	Vitamin carrier, potential antioxidant, precursor for bioactive peptides, fatty acid binding
α -lactalbumin	3.0	1.2	14.200	Effector of lactose synthesis in mammary gland, calcium carrier, immunomodulatory, precursor for bioactive peptides, potentially anticarcinogenic
Immunoglobulins	20-150	0.5-1.0	150.000-1000.000	Specific immune protection through antibodies and complement system, potential precursor for bioactive peptides
Glycomacro-peptide	2.5	1.2	8.000	Antimicrobial, antithrombotic, prebiotic, gastric hormone regulator
Lactoferrin	1.5	0.1	80.000	Antimicrobial, antioxidative, anticarcinogenic, anti-inflammatory, iron transport, cell growth regulation, precursor for bioactive peptides, immunomodulatory, stimulation of osteoblast proliferation
Lactoperoxidase	0.02	0.03	78.000	Antimicrobial, synergistic effects with immunoglobulins, lactoferrin and lysozyme
Lysozyme	0.0004	0.0004	14.000	Antimicrobial, synergistic effects with immunoglobulins, lactoferrin and lactoperoxidase
Serum albumin	1.3	0.3	66.300	Precursor for bioactive peptides
Milk Basic Protein	N.A	N.A	10.000-17.000	Stimulation of osteoblast proliferation and suppression of bone resorption
Growth factors	50 μ g - 40 mg/L	<1 μ g - 2mg/L	6.400-30.000	Stimulation of cell growth, intestinal cell protection and repair, regulation of immune system
Data compiled from Pihlanto and Korhonen (2003), Korhonen and Pihlanto (2007) and Korhonen (2009); N.A.= not announced				

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