

Vegan – WE CAN!

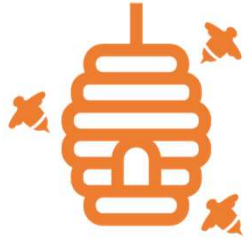
Vegan lifestyle choices  
among young Germans  
& Japanese

Dr. Anna Schrade, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

A top-down view of a glass filled with a vibrant green smoothie. The smoothie has a frothy, bubbly texture. A yellow flower is perched on the rim of the glass as a garnish. The background is filled with fresh green vegetables, including leafy greens and a whole green apple, suggesting a healthy, plant-based diet.

What is a vegan diet / veganism?

# Definitions:



- Vegan diet = plant-based diet:
  - **no animal products** (such as meat, fish, cheese, dairy, eggs, honey etc.)



- Vegan lifestyle:
  - **no animal products, no animal-derived products** (such as leather shoes or wool clothes), **no products tested on animals**





# Figures about vegan lifestyle in Germany



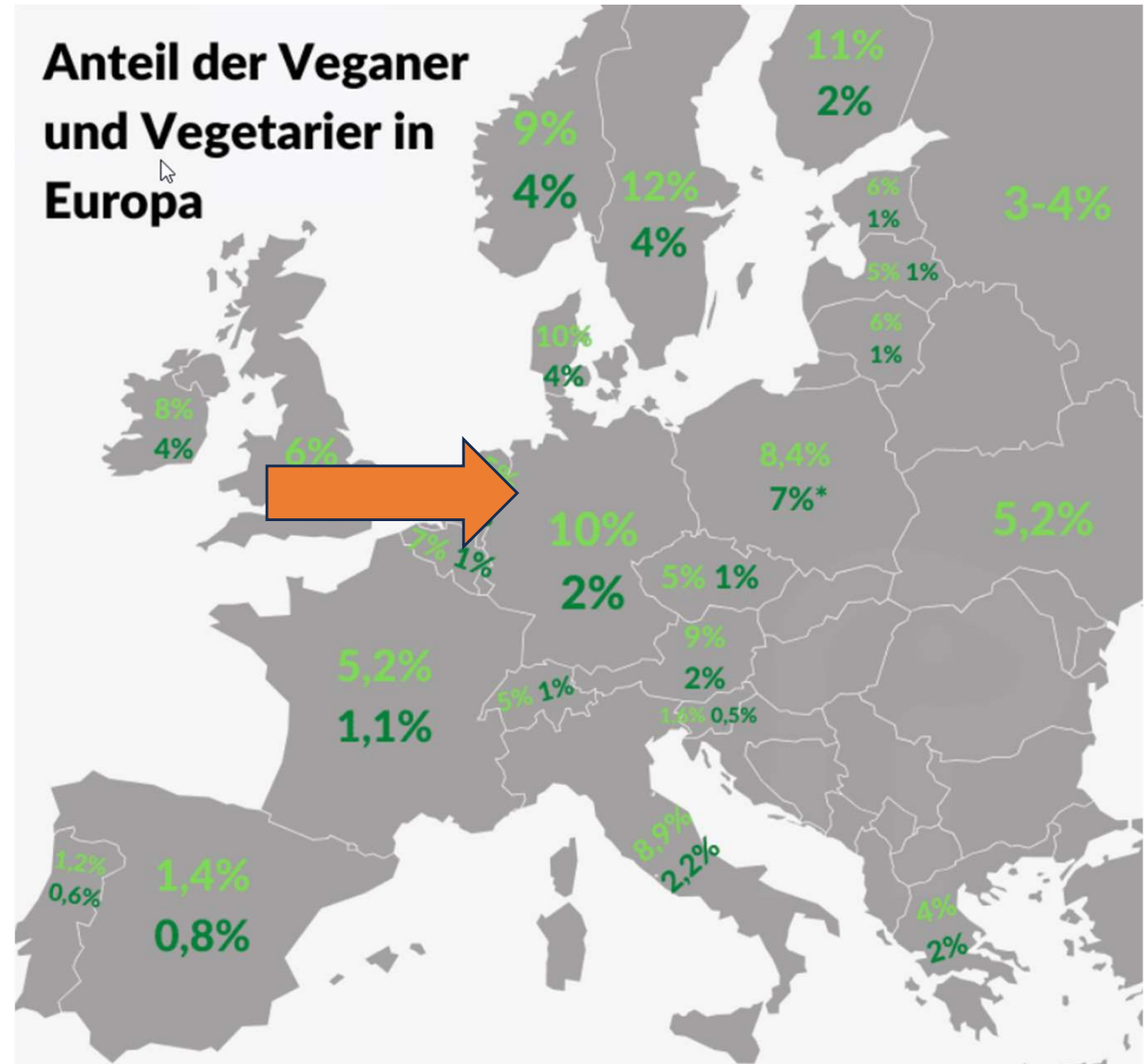
# German diets 2022:

- **Vegans: 2%** of population
- **Vegetarians: 10%** of population
- **Flexitarians: 18%** (reduced meat consumption, meat & dairy substitutes)

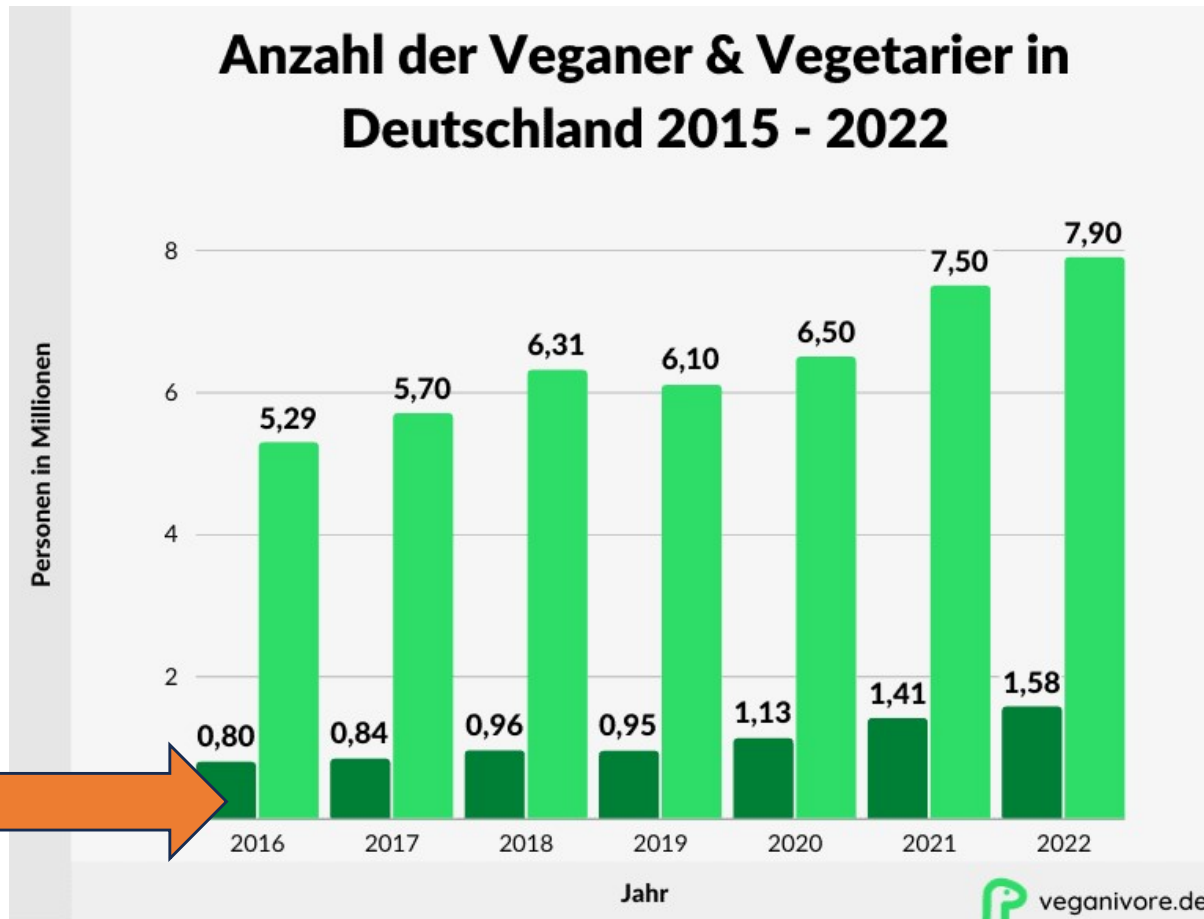


# EU comparison

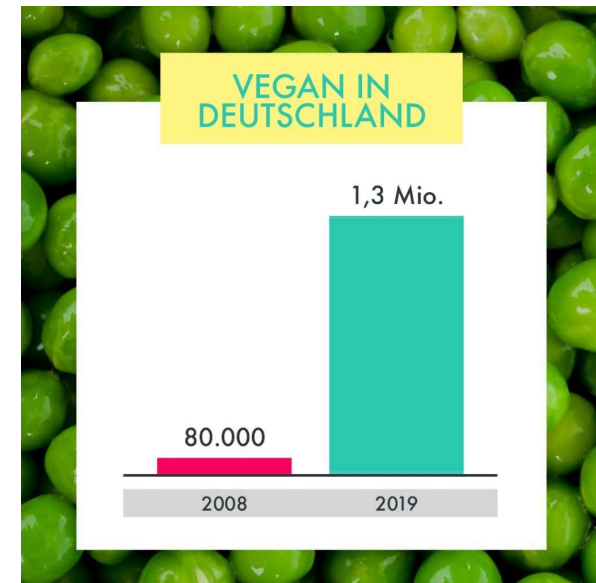
- Germany among the EU countries with the **highest share of vegans & vegetarians**



# Growing number of vegans: +100% in 6 years



2008: 80.000 vegans in Germany  
2019: 1.3 million => **over 16x higher**



Number of vegetarians & vegans in Germany 2015 – 2022  
(dark green: vegans, light green: vegetarians)

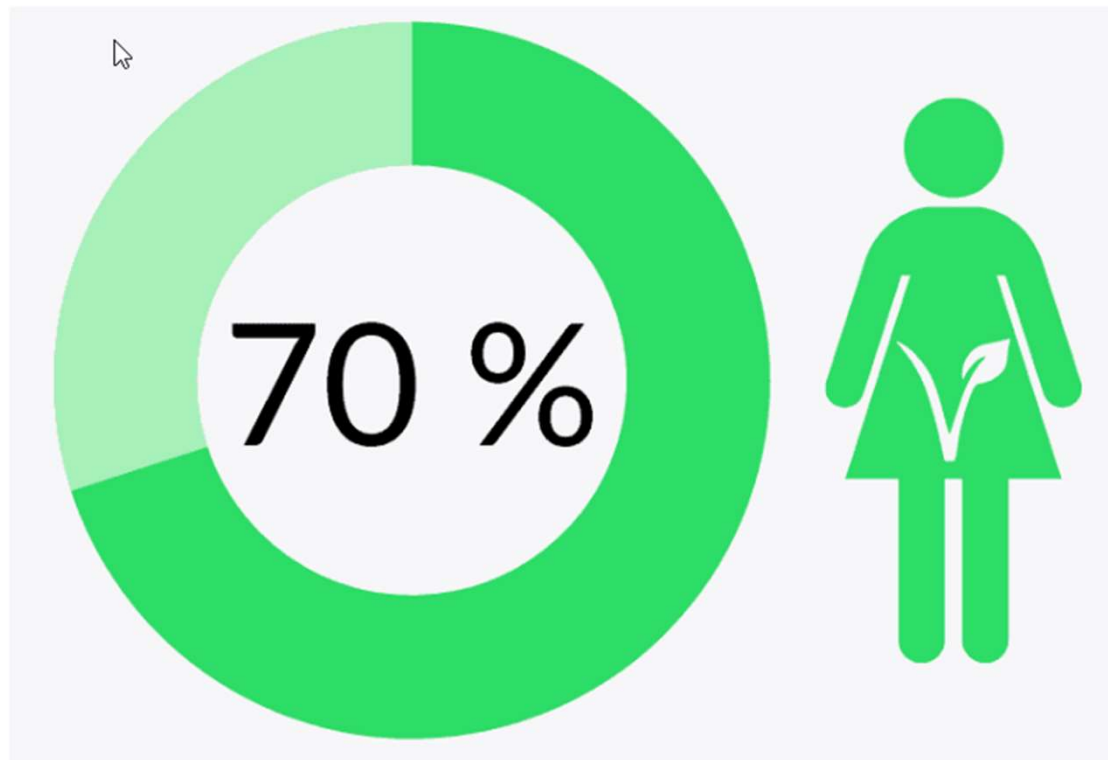


German vegans tend to...



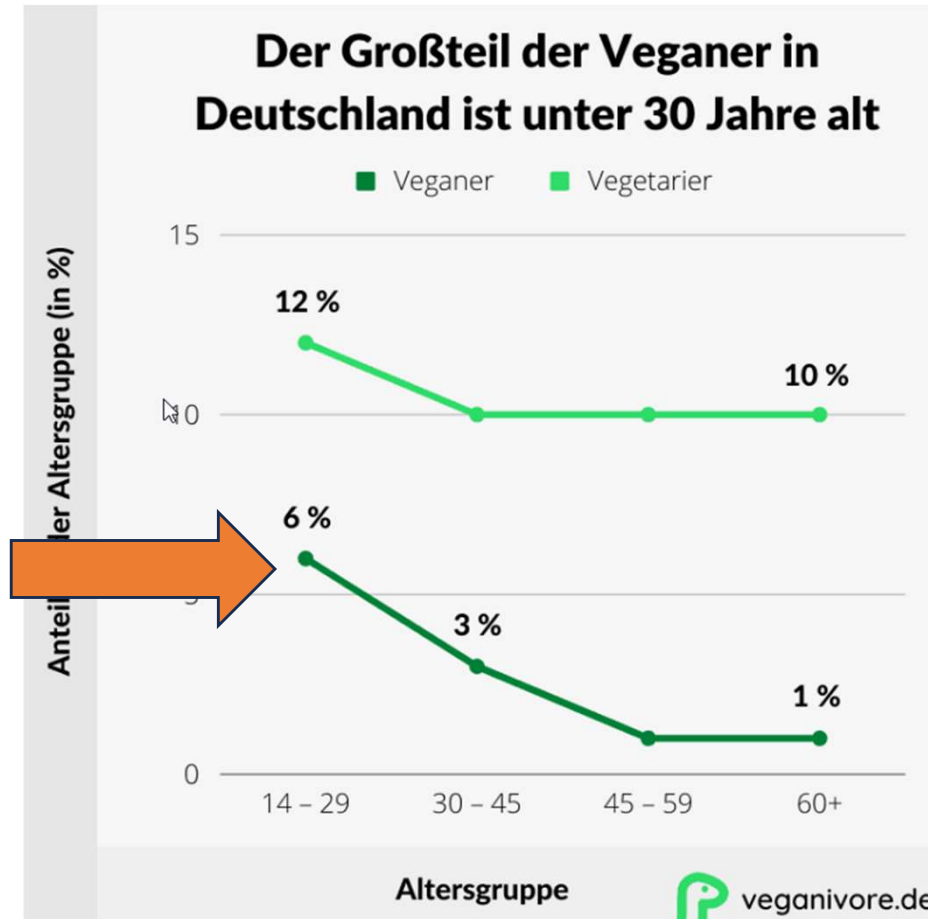


be female (70% of all vegans)



# be under 30

- Share of vegans & vegetarians in different age groups: **6% of people aged 14 to 29 are vegan**



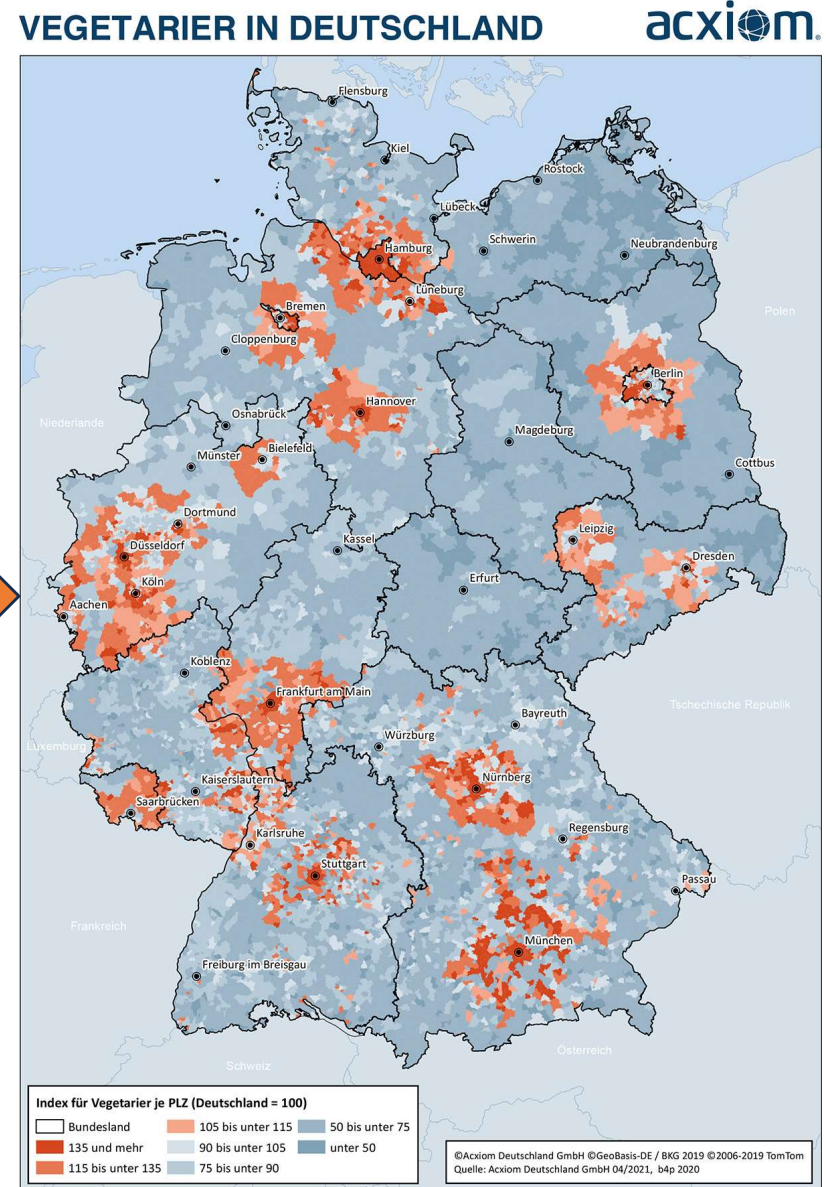
# be highly educated

- Approx **7.5% of all university students are vegan**  
(+25% vegetarian)



# live in big cities

- Highest density (dark red) of vegans in Germany



A collage of fresh produce including green beans, cucumbers, avocados, kiwi, and salmon with herbs. A chalkboard in the center reads "FLEXITARIAN DIET".

Not only vegans eat  
vegan products:  
Flexitarians in Germany

High number of people who are not vegans, but eat vegan products and meat/dairy substitutes

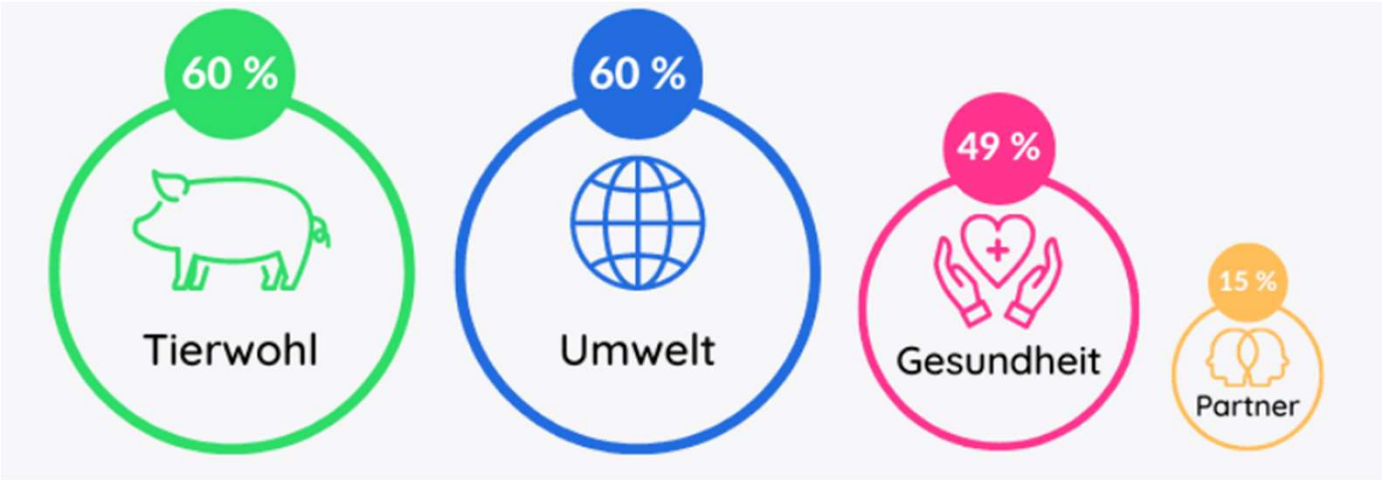
- **Nearly 50% of all Germans drink plant-based milk** (e.g. oat milk, almond milk, soy milk)
- **Around one third of all Germans do not drink cow's milk**



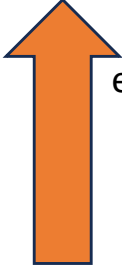
A wooden crate filled with fresh vegetables including tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, broccoli, and eggplant, resting on a wooden surface.

# Reasons for vegan lifestyles in Germany

# Reasons for vegan diets



Animal welfare



environment

health

Impacted by partner



# Main reasons for vegan diets: climate & health

- #1 reason for **young people going vegan: environment** (80% of 15–29-year-olds)
- #1 reason for **older people going vegan: health** (64% of 60-75-year-olds)



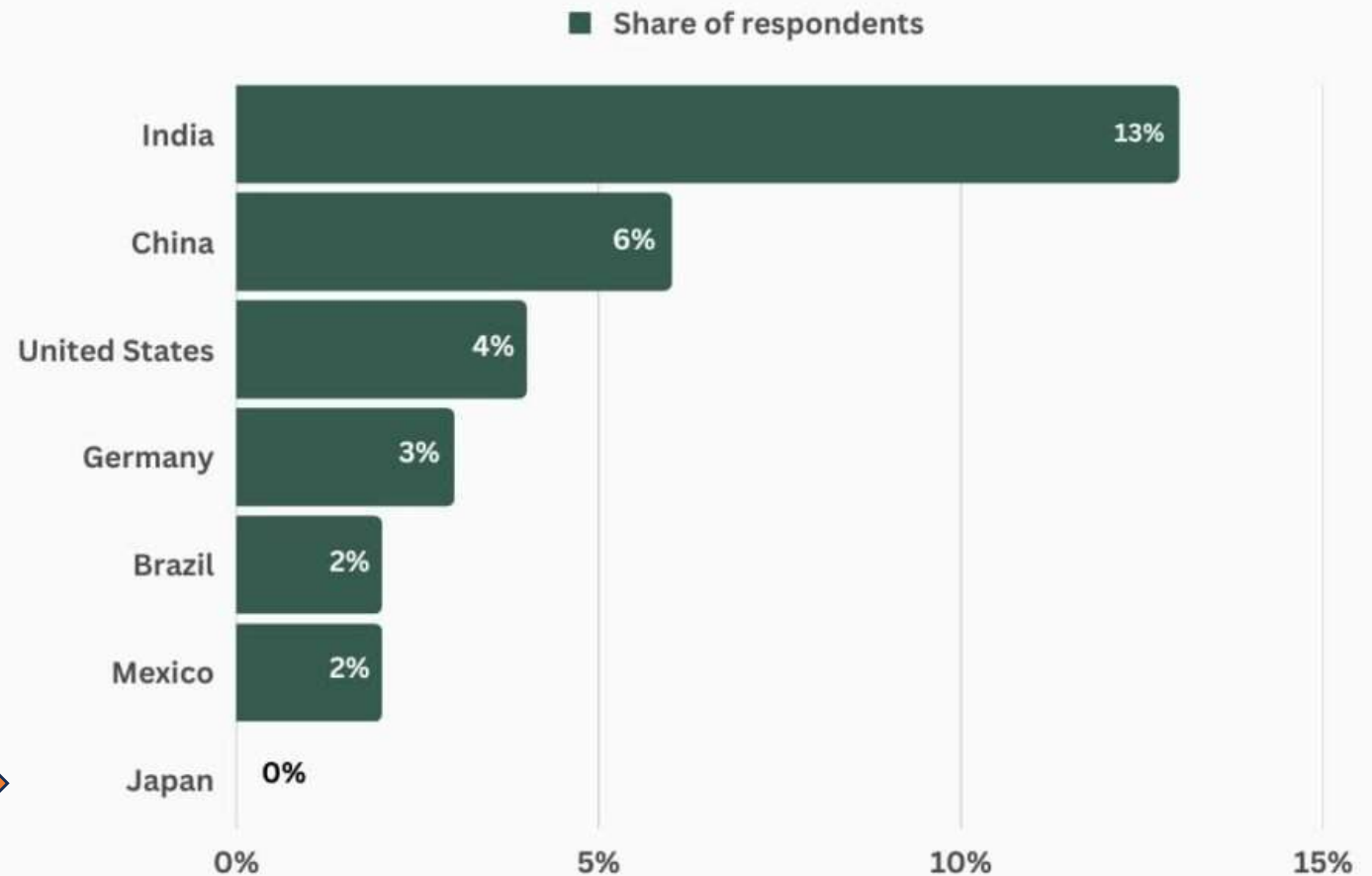


# Vegan lifestyle in Japan



Few  
vegans

## SHARE OF VEGANS IN SELECT COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE IN 2022

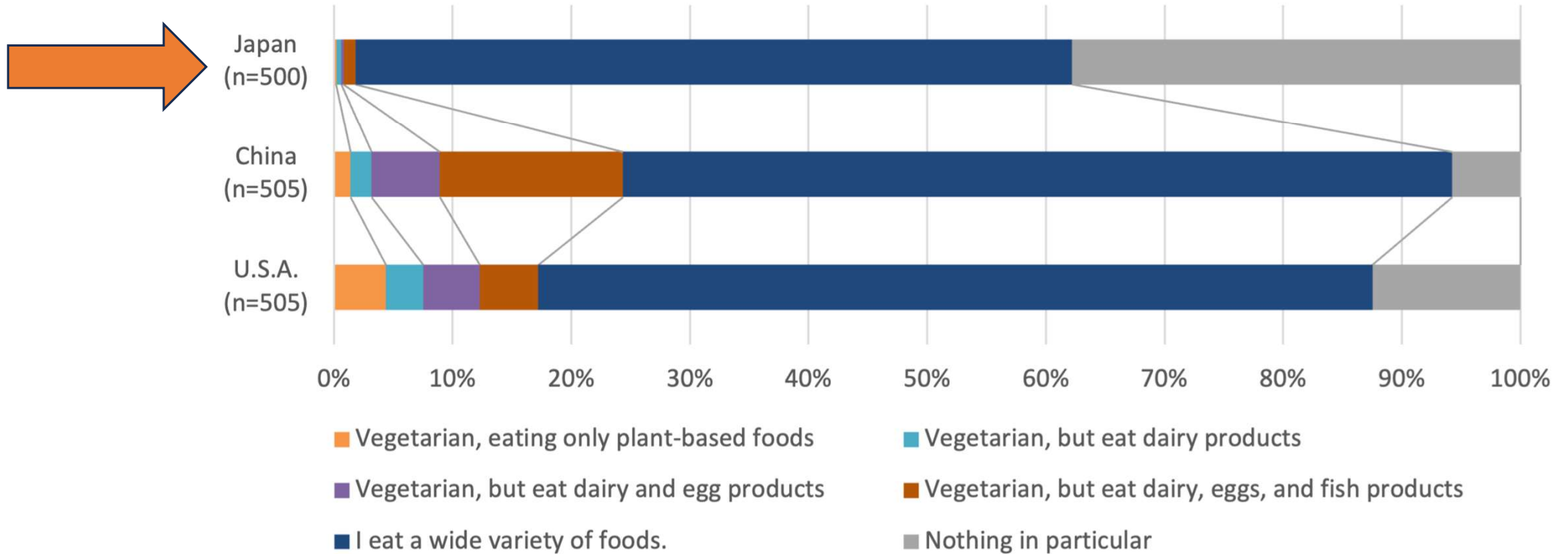


Source: Statista Consumer Insights

worldanimalfoundation.org

# Vegans in Japan, China & US

Dietary Preferences by Country



# But: growing interest in vegan food in Japan

- **Demand from overseas visitors** (around 5% of them are vegetarian/vegan, and several millions are Muslims)
- Demand from **health-conscious Japanese middle-aged women**



# New vegan options in restaurants & shops



# Plant-based products more readily available

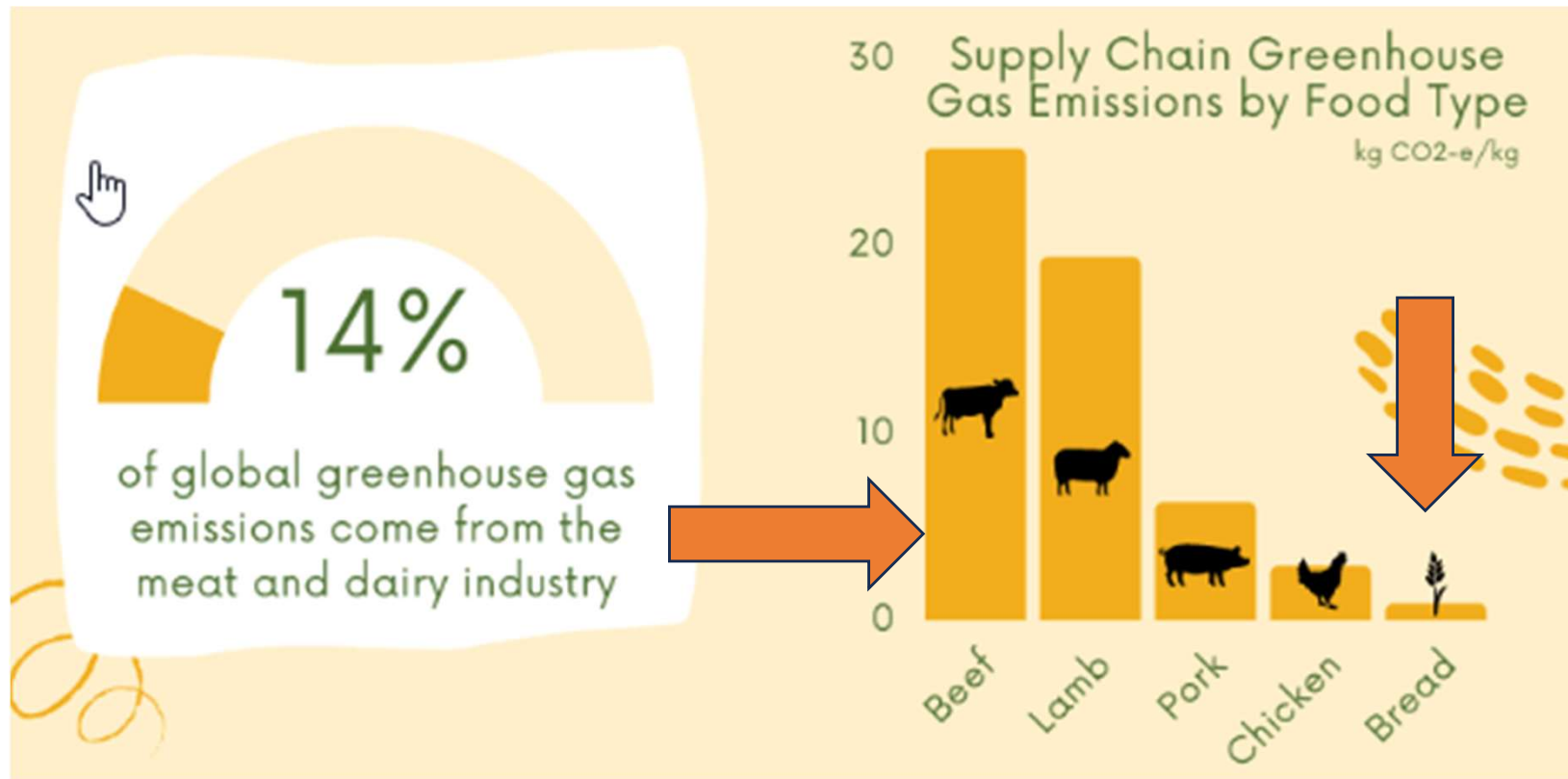


A close-up photograph of fresh green leafy vegetables, likely kale or collard greens, covered in water droplets. The leaves are vibrant green with prominent veins. The background is dark, making the green leaves stand out. The text is overlaid on the lower-left portion of the image.

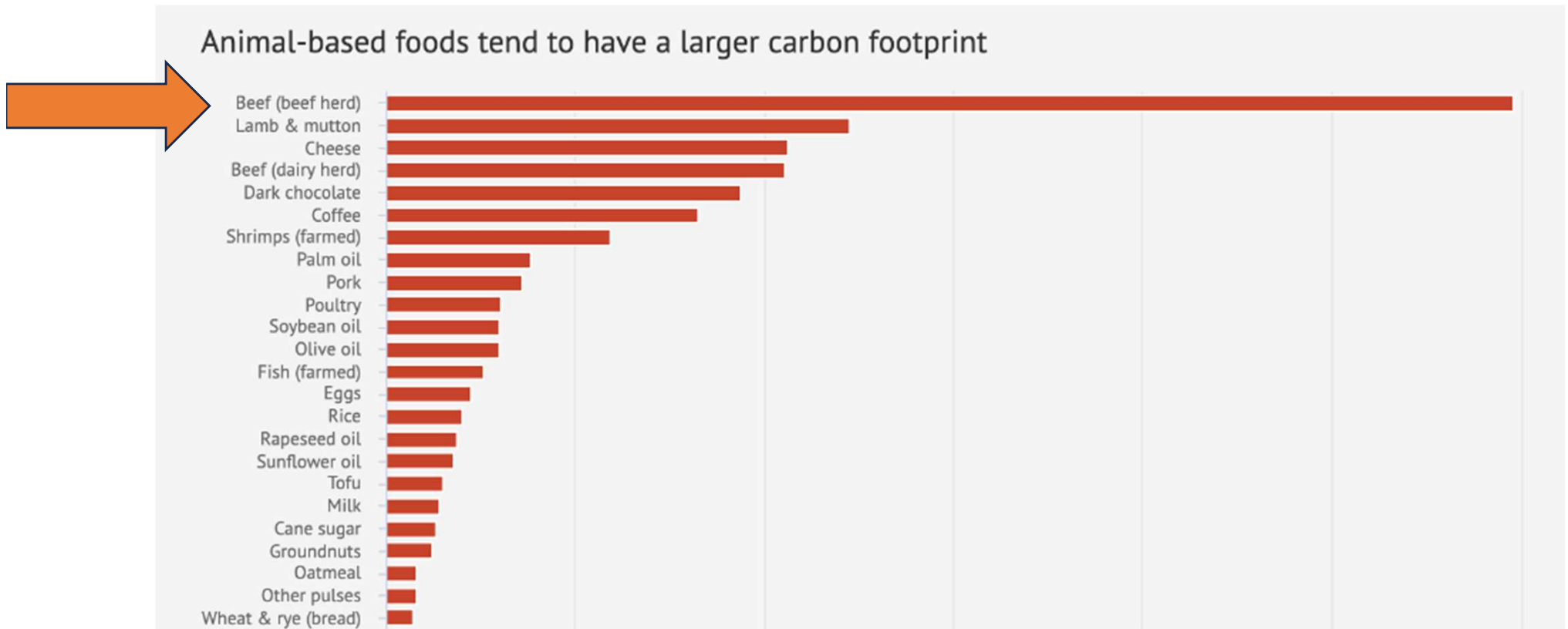
# Reasons for going vegan in Germany & Japan: environment



# Meat and greenhouse gas emissions



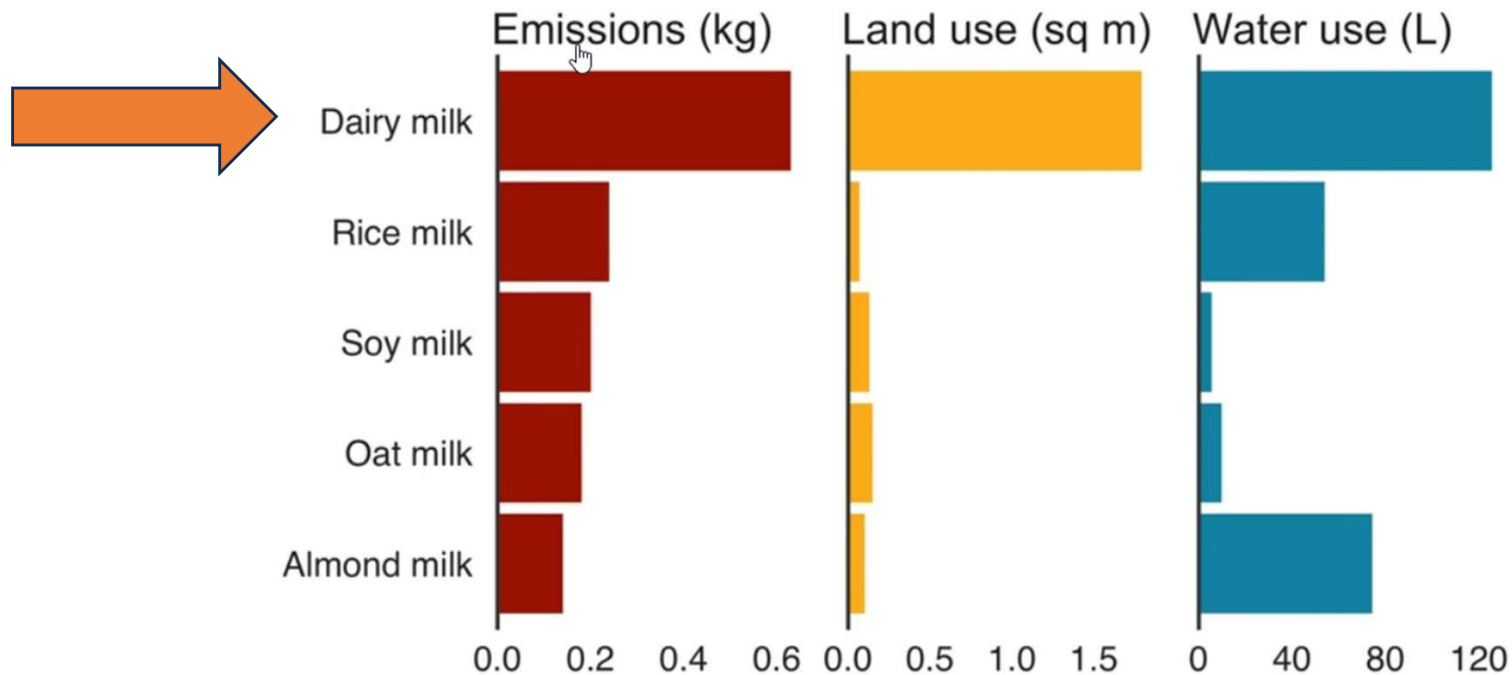
# Carbon footprint of different food types: highest for beef



# Env. Impact: milk vs. plant-based milk

## Which milk should I choose?

Environmental impact of one glass (200ml) of different milks



Source: Poore & Nemecek (2018), Science. Additional calculations, J. Poore



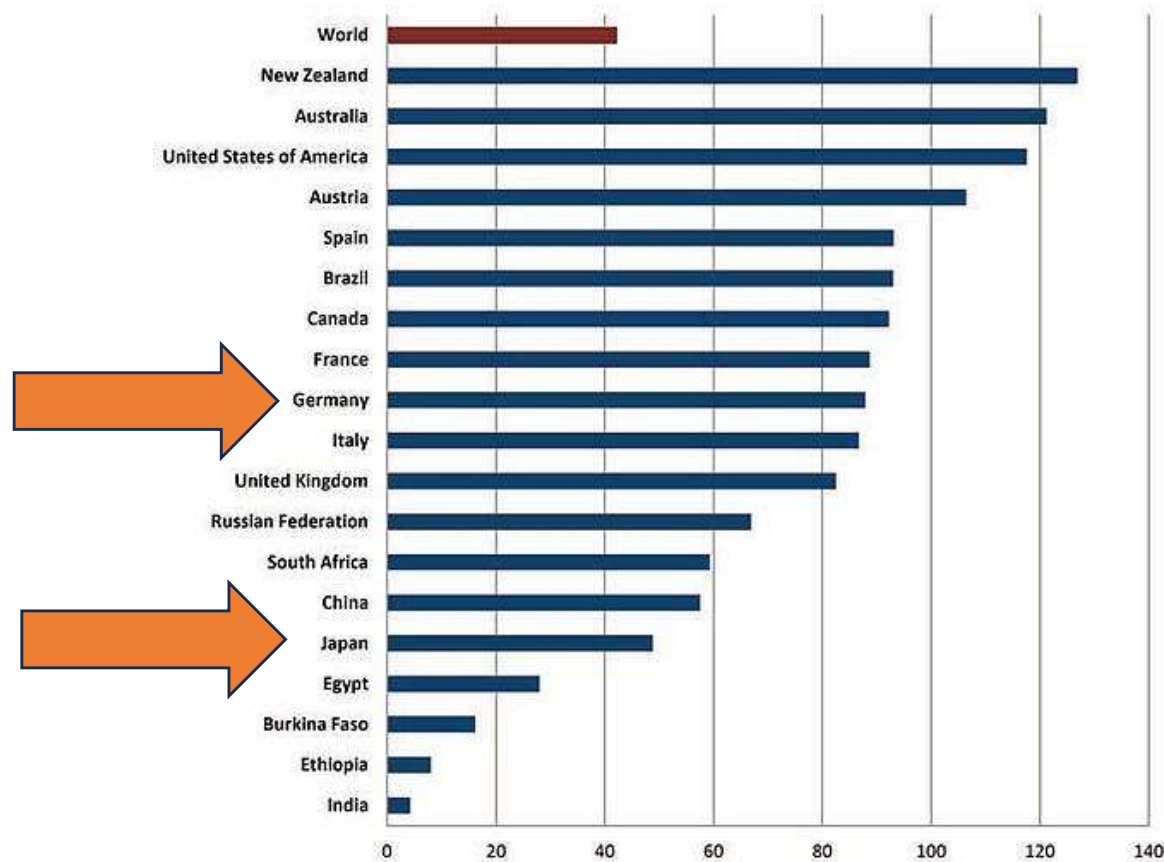
# Deforestation (e.g. Amazon rainforest) due to commercial (cattle) farming





Why are there many  
vegans in Germany?

# 1.) High meat & dairy consumption in Germany



- High meat consumption -> **health problems, environmental destruction, high emissions**

## 2.) Higher environm. consciousness in Germany

- **Historically high interest in environmental protection** (1968 movement, recycling, renewable energies, climate change)



### 3.) Wide availability of meat-free alternatives & meat substitutes



- Germany: most newly launched meat substitutes globally
- E.g. Rügenwalder: big meat & sausage company became leading meat-substitute provider, non-meat business bigger than meat business now for Rügenwalder



# Growing market for meat substitutes

## Vegetarische und vegane Fleischersatzprodukte Produktion in Deutschland



- +35% in 2 years
- Germany as country with largest number of new vegan substitute products
- **Nearly 100,000 tons of meat substitute products in 2021**

# Vegan sausages & meat products



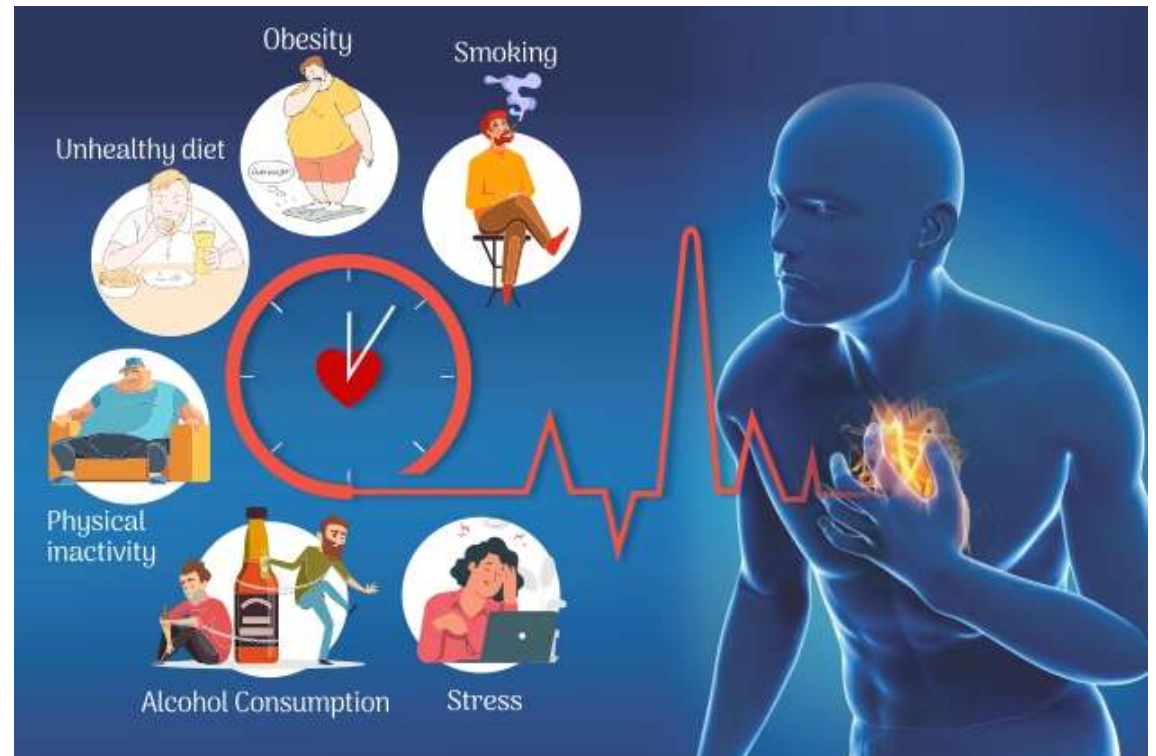
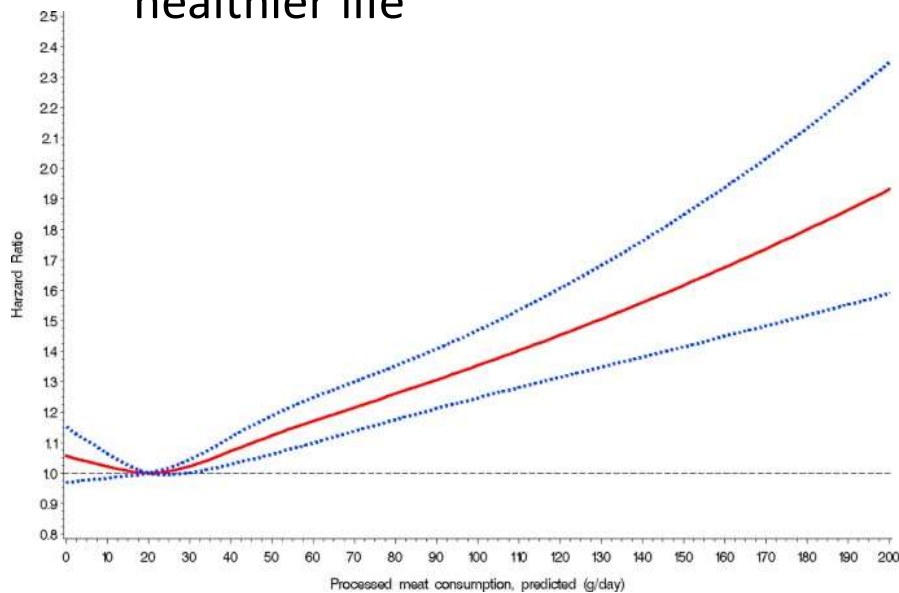


# Vegan charcuterie

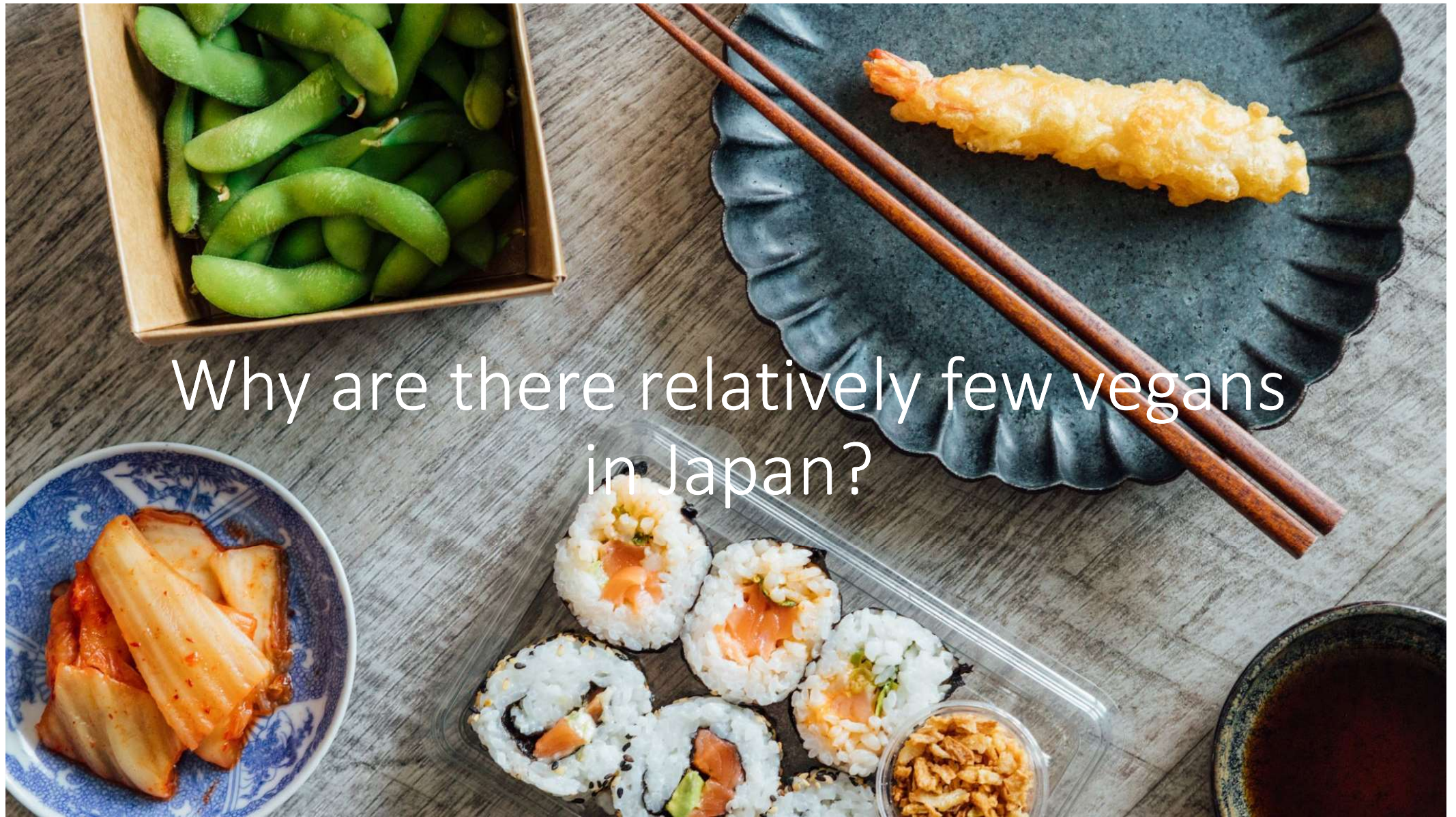


# 4. Higher prevalence of obesity and cardiovascular diseases

Older people charcuterie stop eating meat for a longer, healthier life



Hazard ratio (risk of diseases) increases with consumption of red meat



Why are there relatively few vegans in Japan?

# 1. Fear of sticking out

- Conformity in Japan & school meal: everyone should (must?) eat everything; fear of 'sticking out' or causing problems to others (e.g. at *nomikai*)



## 2. Low media attention

- Relatively low number of vegan role models & vegan ideas in the media and daily life (albeit growing)





### 3. Low understanding of veganism

- Low understanding of vegetarian & vegan diets due to low presence in the media etc. Few vegan products/restaurants -> fewer impulses, higher inhibition



## 4. Traditional Japanese diet healthy

- **Japanese**  
**'standard' diet**  
**relatively healthy**  
-> fewer people to  
go vegan for  
health reasons



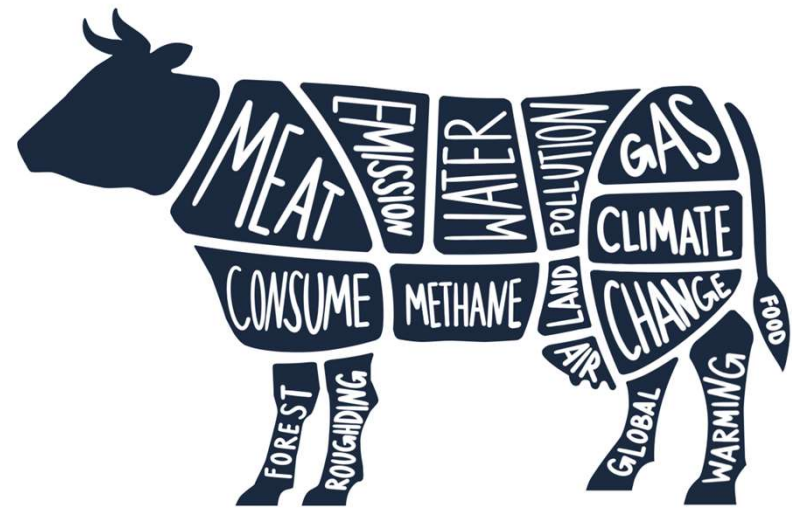
## 5. Many vegan-like foods & high use of dashi

- Many 'close-to-vegan' food items: **many people eat lots plant-based products but are not vegan**
- Hard to be completely vegan due to high prevalence of dashi in most vegetable meals etc.



## 6. Low awareness of meat's impact on climate

- Low awareness that meat consumption impacts climate change



MEAT = HEAT ?  
LELE SCHLAICH & ALINE SAWALSKY

## Summary / Conclusion

- Why are there a lot of Vegans in Germany, despite the high prevalence of meat & dairy in the traditional diet? **It is not DESPITE, BUT BECAUSE OF the central role meat plays in German cuisine**
  - high meat consumption = negative impact on climate, health, animal rights etc.
  - Germany: Long history of (and interest in) environmental movements, climate action & animal rights



# Thanks for your attention

I am happy to answer any questions  
regarding my research (methods, content,  
results etc.)