MEAT SUBSTITUTES FOR FLEXITARIANS: A design driven approach to inspire food developers.

Although product designers have started to recognize the importance of explorations around food, participation of product designers in the development of meat substitutes is very limited. My participation as interaction designer within this project starts at the fuzzy front end of product development suggesting new insights to the development and the design of meat substitutes.

WHAT IS A MEAT SUBSTITUTE?

A meat substitute is a food product that resembles some aesthetic, sensual and/or performance characteristics of certain types of meat.

WHY IS THERE A PUSH FOR MEAT SUBSTITUTES CONSUMPTION?

From an ecological point of view, livestock used in meat production is responsible for 18% of CO2 emission (Black, 2008). It also requires most resources to nourish the livestock: crops to feed them, water, fertilizer and fuel for transportation.

THE LIKEMEAT PROJECT:

In 2011 the European Commission launched the LikeMeat Project, whose aim is to increase European meat substitute efforts. Small and medium sized enterprises are encouraged to develop new substituents and to participate in this growing market.

Wageningen UR Food & Biobased Research, one of the parties involved in LikeMeat, is responsible for the consumer research for this project, in order to broaden their results in the Wageningen UR Food & Biobased Research, small and mediumsized enterprises are encouraged to participate in European sustainability efforts. Small and mediumsized enterprises are encouraged to participate in European sustainability efforts.

MEAT SUBSTITUTES FOR FLEXITARIANS?

A Flexitarian is an omnivore individual with reduced meat consumption. They do not abstain from meat but they choose to reduce their intake as much as possible. The reasons for this dietary flexibility may vary. During the research it was identified that the characteristics of flexitarians users are diverse and they have different motivations to adopt a Flexitarian eating habit. The main motivations are health, environmental concerns, pleasure-seeking or practicality.

WHO ARE THE FLEXITARIANS?

Successfully consume meat substitutes. There is very little knowledge and appreciation for them. There is not a connection with the product, I do not know about it. However, further research is needed to understand the long-term impact of the interaction qualities proposed.

HOW IS THE FLEXITARIANS’ INTERACTION WITH MEAT SUBSTITUTES?

There is no adoption in the daily diets. In an effort of making a product simple and convenient to use our intended users are passive witnesses of the interaction. There is an evident detachment from meat substitutes. There is very little knowledge and appreciation for them. There is not a connection with the product, I do not know about it.

HOW IS THE FLEXITARIANS’ INTERACTION WITH FUTURE MEAT SUBSTITUTES SHOULDBE?

For Flexitarians meat substitutes should be are friendly food products that stimulate them to share or prepare nutritional (and aesthetically) satisfying meals. Flexitarians should be in way co-producers of their experience with the product. Either because the product allows them to explore their kitchen creativity or to share with others. The communication should be more transparent: what it is, made from what, etc.

HOW IS THE FLEXITARIANS’ INTERACTION WITH FUTURE MEAT SUBSTITUTES? Should?

Two meat substitutes concepts are suggested as attractive options for flexitarians. These design concepts that integrate the guidelines of the project, desired interactions and vision into meat substitutes. They will work as first discussion piece of the elements I am proposing to meat substitutes.

HOW FLEXITARIANS REACT TO THEM?

Evaluative test has shown that the interaction qualities I proposed where successful because the response of the Flexitarians was positive. However, further research is needed in the long-term impact of the interaction qualities I propose.

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