

Introduction

- The plant-based food market is increasing in popularity demonstrated (\$4.5 billion market value) with the plant-based milk sales growing 9% from 2017 to 2018 (Houck, 2018; (Settembre, 2019).
- Fluid dairy milk consumption has declined 101 lbs. per capita consumption from 1976 to 2018 (United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, n.d.).
- The media have a role in influencing consumers by drawing attention to some topics and shaping how those topics are presented (Happer & Philo, 2013).
- As the popularity of plant-based milk increases, it is necessary to explore media coverage to inform communication efforts of the dairy and plant-based milk industries.

Theoretical Framework

According to the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, the mass media play an important role in conveying information to members of a social system (Rogers, 2003). This applies to this study by examining the frequency and scope with which the media has reported on plant-based milk.

Tracking the Trend: Exploring News Coverage about Plant-Based Milk

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Methodology

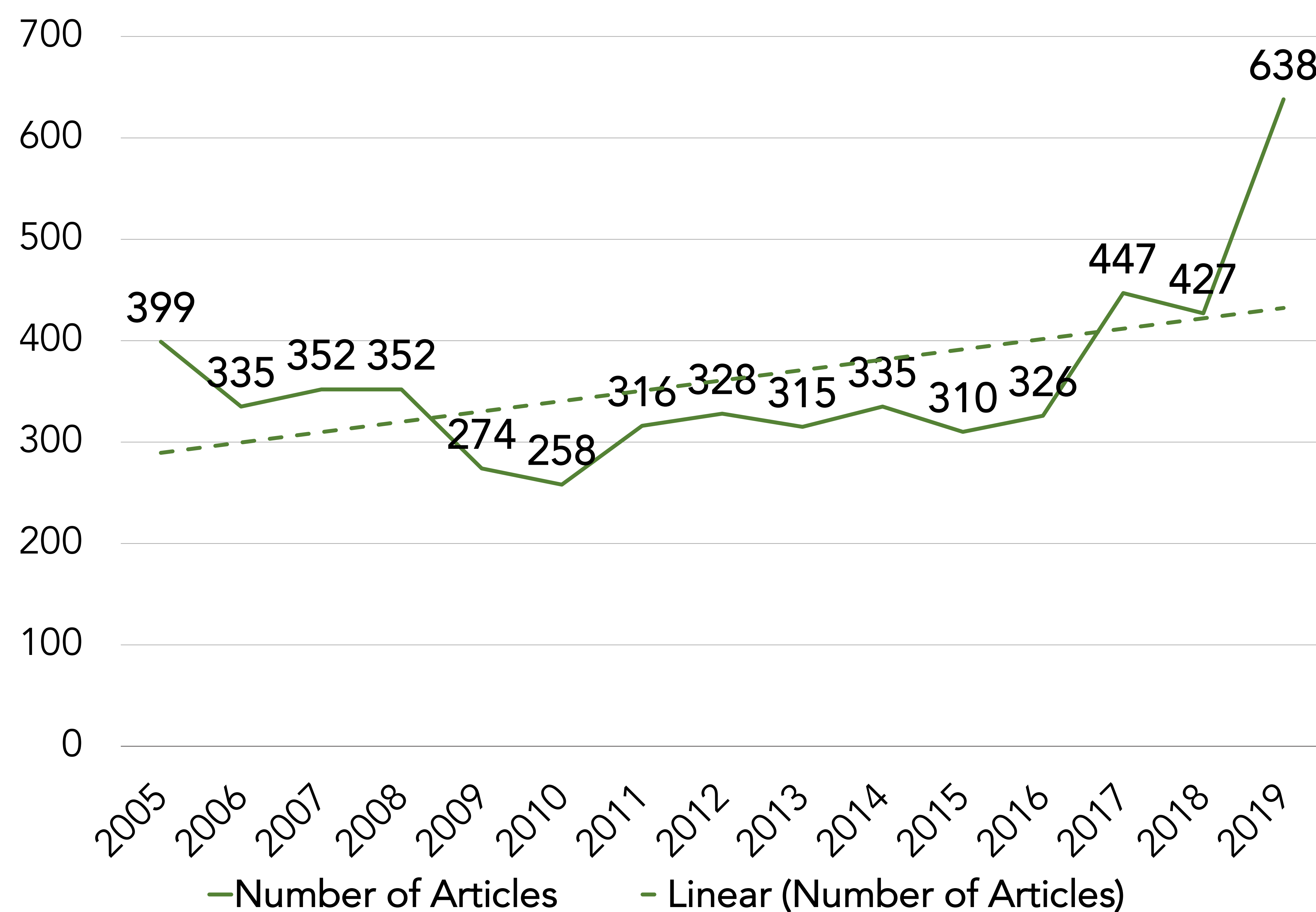
Data Collection	• A monitor was established in the Nexis Uni database with the timeframe of January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2019.
Why content analysis?	• This is an ideal methodology to examine the prevalence of an issue in media coverage over time (Riff et al., 2014).
Search Method	• Boolean search keywords: plant-based milk, plant based milk, almond milk, soymilk, oat milk, peanut milk, rice milk, cashew milk, walnut milk, plant milk, coconut milk, and pea milk.
Sample Size	• Based on the results from the search, states with the most content were selected to represent the Northeast (New York, $n = 2,626$), West (California, $n = 603$; Utah, $n = 330$), Midwest (Illinois, $n = 1,132$), and Southeast (Georgia, $n = 452$; Florida, $n = 620$).



Conclusion/ Implications/ Recommendations

- Plant-based milk has seen an increase in popularity which is reflected in news coverage during the past 15 years.
- The more exposure people have to a topic, the more likely they are to have information that could influence decision making.
- Agricultural communicators should closely monitor media coverage of issues (frequency of coverage, scope, and tonality) to help identify how external trends may influence the adoption of innovations such as plant-based milk.
- Future research should explore plant-based milk content on social media and monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on 2020 article numbers.
- Another recommendation is to analyze each keyword used in the Boolean search to see what trends exist with different commodities (e.g. almond, soy, etc.).

Newspaper Coverage About Plant-Based Milk



References

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