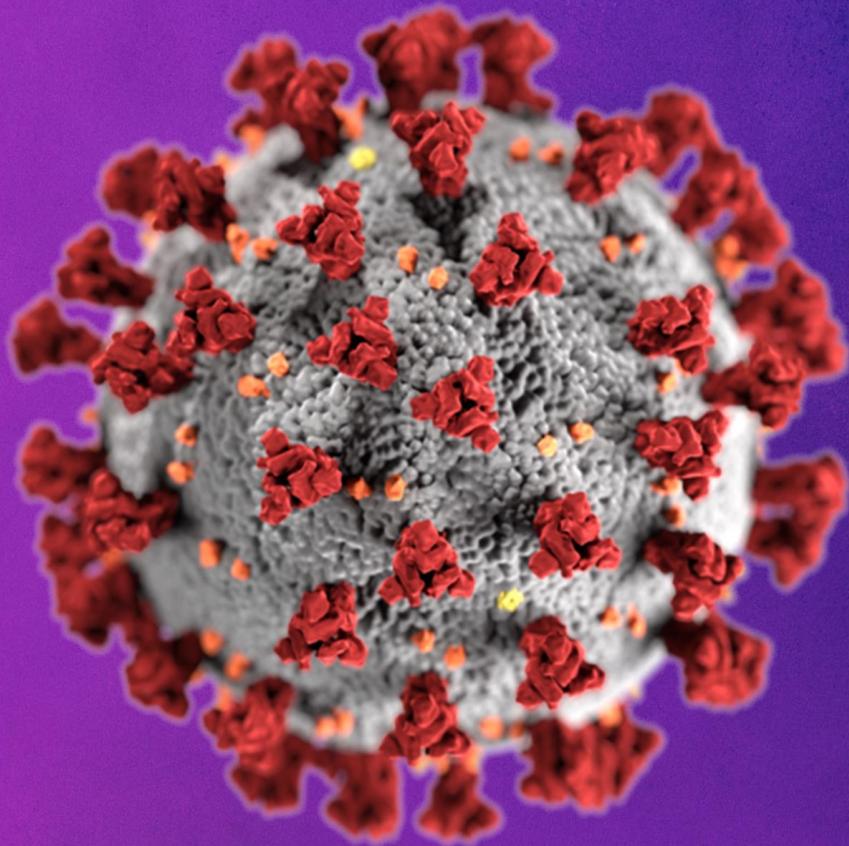


COVID-19

report 18: WHERE'S THE MEAT?

5.13.20





As cases of the coronavirus continue to spread, U.S. meat plants have been hit especially hard. With working conditions that make it near impossible to maintain social distance, nearly 20 meatpacking plants have temporarily closed in just the past few weeks. On April 28th, President Trump issued an executive order to keep meat processing plants open, yet some remain closed while others are working at severely reduced capacity. Consumers are already feeling it at the grocery store, with fewer selections, higher prices, and purchase limits to prevent another episode of panic buying. Restaurants are feeling it too, as many begin to ramp up for reopening with limited meat supply and rising prices. Americans still love their meat, but as the most expensive item in their food budget, most would rather eat less meat than worry about escalating prices. While measures have been put in place to prevent another “toilet paper shortage” crisis, some consumers are already starting to stock up on meats.

As meat shortages become more of an issue, how will consumers prepare, and what can restaurants do to keep them as customers?

Here are highlights from Datassential's latest wave of Coronavirus research, fielded on May 6 with 1,000 U.S consumers.

RECENT KEY EVENTS



May 7

US should test 900,000 people a day for coronavirus by May 15, Harvard institute says
Nevada governor says state will begin to partially reopen
White House staffers and Secret Service agents tested following COVID-19 case in West Wing
Kentucky governor says restaurants can open on May 22

May 8

Clinical trial of remdesivir and anti-inflammatory drug combo to treat COVID-19 begins
Restaurant employment falls to lowest level since 1989, industry group says

May 9

The hospitalization rate across New York continues to fall, governor says
Federal government ships 260 cases of remdesivir to hardest-hit states
FDA chief begins two-week self-quarantine
US Army working to develop wearable sensors to detect Coronavirus symptoms

May 10

More than 79,000 people have died from Coronavirus in the US
Lab-made antibodies could be available by end of summer, biotech company says

May 11

South Carolina restaurants reopen for limited indoor dining
Coronavirus cases rose over weekend in some countries where lockdowns were lifted
Ohio reopens restaurant patios, hair salons, retail
Colorado restaurant illegally reopens with no social distancing; state revokes its business license

As people prove to themselves that they can rise to COVID-related challenges, they'll panic a little less

Humans are hardwired to be most fearful of the unknown. When the *novel* Coronavirus emerged, panic ensued. Grocery store shelves were depleted, and everyday necessities were nowhere to be found. In just a few short months, people have found ways to solve for everyday problems that earlier may have seemed insurmountable. Distilleries pivoted to make hand sanitizer, restaurants sold their surplus as groceries, and retailers purchased products no longer needed by shuttered businesses. The virus has thrown us yet another curveball, with meatpacking plants closing. While some consumers are stocking up, there seems to be less panic this time around.

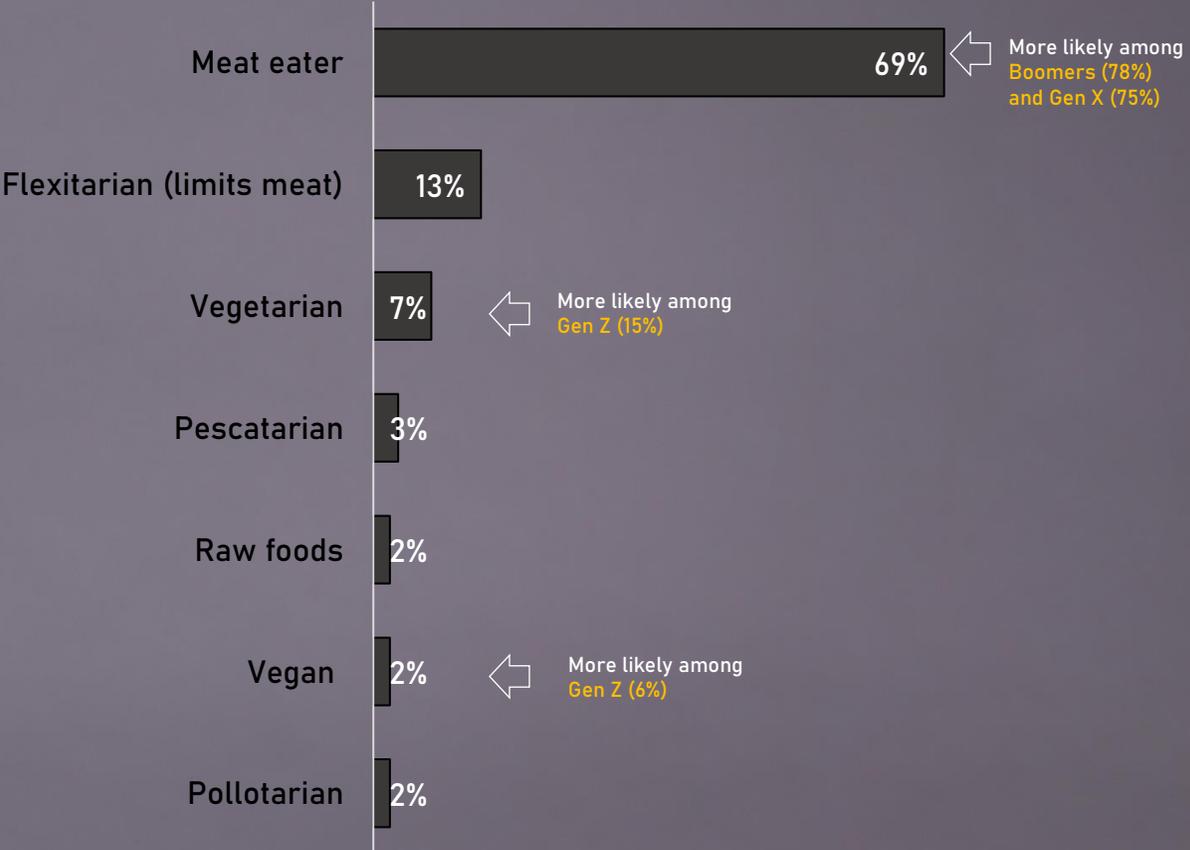
Consumers have become accustomed to finding resourceful solutions and are willing to be more flexible and forgiving than before. Restaurants should be transparent about why they're out of beef or other meats, and they should offer up craveable substitutes. Be cautious in addressing rising costs, as diners are price-sensitive and there is a risk of seeming like you're price gouging.





We are still a “meat and potatoes” country.

Boomers are the biggest carnivores; Gen Z more likely to go meatless.



which of the following best describes the way you eat today?

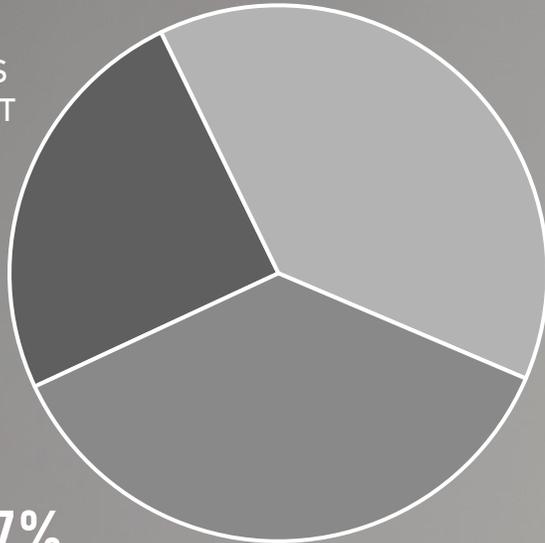
Nothing can come between Americans and their meat.

While the spread of COVID among plant workers may make some nervous, it will not stop most Americans from stocking their grocery carts with meat. Younger demographics like Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to cut down on meat purchases.

25%

YES, I WILL BE LESS LIKELY TO BUY MEAT

More likely among Gen Z (41%) and Millennials (37%)



39%

IT MAKES ME NERVOUS BUT WON'T STOP ME FROM BUYING MEAT

37%
NO, THIS DOESN'T CONCERN ME

More likely among Boomers (45%)



does knowing that some workers have been diagnosed with COVID at certain meat plants in the U.S. make you feel less safe about buying meat at the store?

COVID won't sway people from ordering their favorite meat dishes.

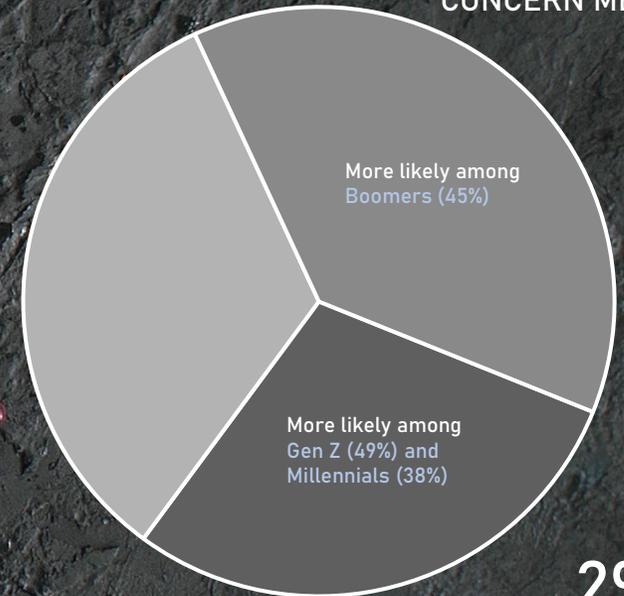
By now, many probably understand that COVID is not a foodborne illness and that heated foods are the safest, so most will continue to order meat-based dishes when dining out. The more conservative Boomers are least likely to be worried, while Gen Z and Millennials convey the strongest levels of concern.

33%

IT MAKES ME NERVOUS, BUT WON'T STOP ME FROM ORDERING MEAT DISHES

38%

NO, THIS DOESN'T CONCERN ME



29%

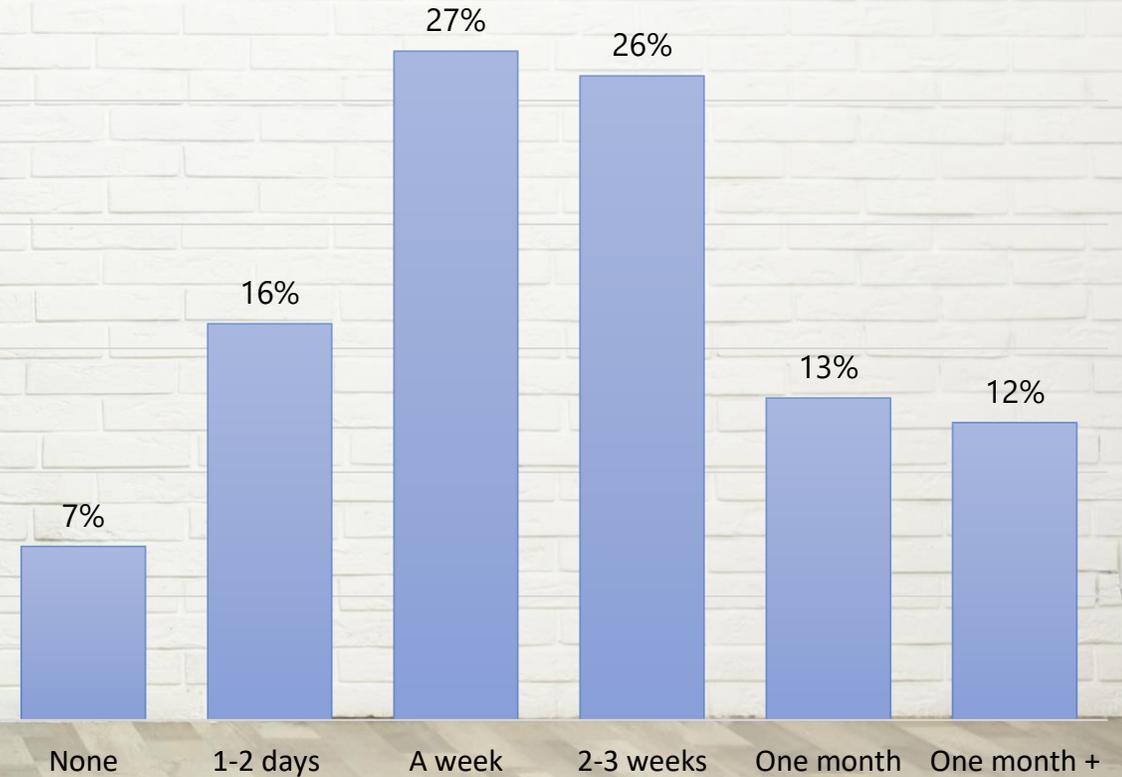
YES, I WILL BE LESS LIKELY TO ORDER MEAT DISHES

does knowing that some workers have been diagnosed with COVID at certain meat plants in the U.S. make you feel less safe about ordering meat dishes at restaurants?



Toilet paper isn't the only thing we stock up on.

how much meat do you have on hand
in your fridge or freezer right now?

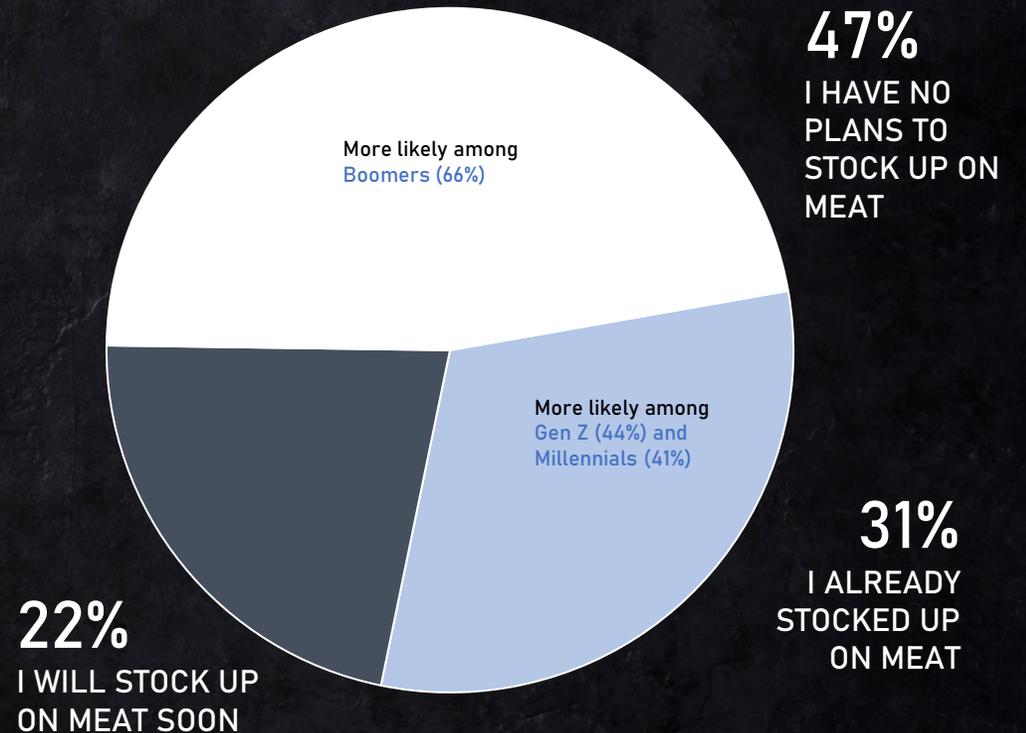




Many are already gearing up.

In our report on The Human Condition, we learned that the COVID crisis has left some more eager to prepare for “next time.” While we’re still navigating our way through this crisis, many are already practicing what they’ve learned. Half of Americans have already stocked up or plan to shortly, in anticipation of the upcoming meat shortage.

Given reports of a potential meat shortage due to COVID, have you already stocked up on meat at the grocery store in the past week or two?



Chicken and beef are top on grocery lists.

what types of meat have you/will you stock up on in anticipation of a potential meat shortage due to COVID?

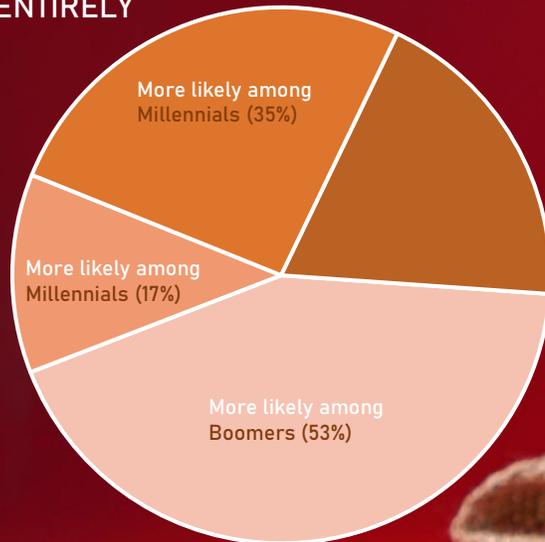


It's (some kind of) burger or bust.

When Americans have a taste for burgers, they will find a way to have one, whether it means substituting with some other form of meat or simply finding a restaurant where they are available. One in four will order something else. Convenience driven Millennials are most flexible, willing to order something different or swap out for plant-based.

If there were no beef burgers available at a restaurant, what would you order instead?

26%
SOMETHING ELSE
ENTIRELY



12%
A PLANT-BASED
BURGER

19%
NONE, I WOULD GO
SOMEPLACE ELSE

43%
ANOTHER KIND OF
BURGER (TURKEY,
CHICKEN)



Americans will “meat” in the middle.

Consumers may have learned a thing or two from the initial grocery panic, like rationing limited supplies and using their detective skills to hunt down coveted items. They'll use these same tactics if they face an impending meat shortage. Most would cut down on their consumption, whether at home or with restaurant dishes featuring less meat. They will also be more resourceful and deliberate in finding places that have what they want, whether grocery stores or restaurants. With many suffering financially, paying higher prices falls lower on this list.

	True	
I will try to eat less meat in general	74%	← More likely among Boomers (83%)
I will choose grocery stores based on who has the meat I want	63%	
I'd be open to restaurants featuring less meat in a dish	61%	
I will choose restaurants based on availability of meat dishes I want	55%	
If there is a shortage at the grocery store, I will get meat elsewhere	53%	← More likely among HH's with kids (61%)
I am willing to pay a higher price for meat at the grocery store	49%	
I will switch to eating more plant-based meats/meat alternatives	47%	← More likely among Gen Z (62%) and Millennial (56%)
I would buy raw meat from restaurants if they offered it	42%	← More likely among Gen X (49%)
I am willing to pay higher prices for meat dishes at sit-down restaurants	41%	
I am willing to pay higher prices for burgers at fast food restaurants	38%	← More likely among Gen Z (51%)



how would you rate the following statements regarding a potential meat shortages due to COVID, true or false?



HOTSHOT REPORT

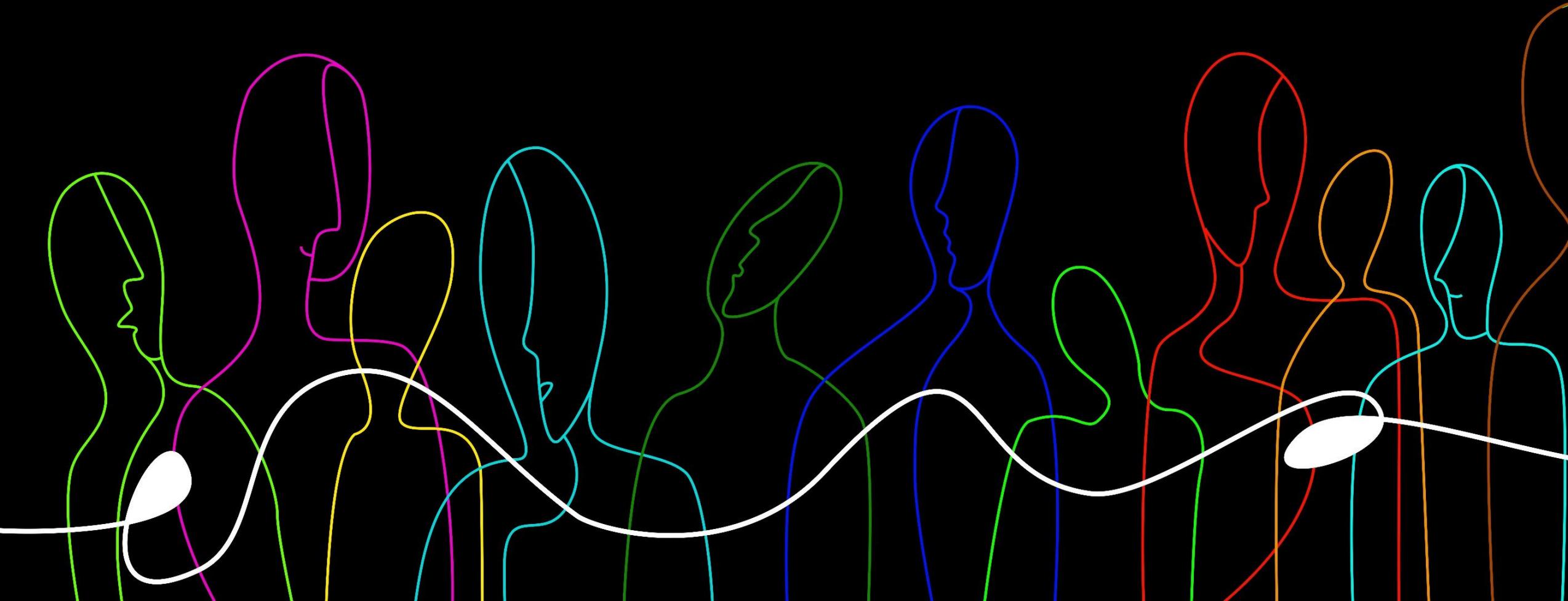
Visit Datassential's Coronavirus Resource Library at datassential.com/Coronavirus, your one-stop shop for all COVID-19 research reports, video interviews, restaurant closure maps, and Traffic Briefings, all updated daily as new data come out of the field.

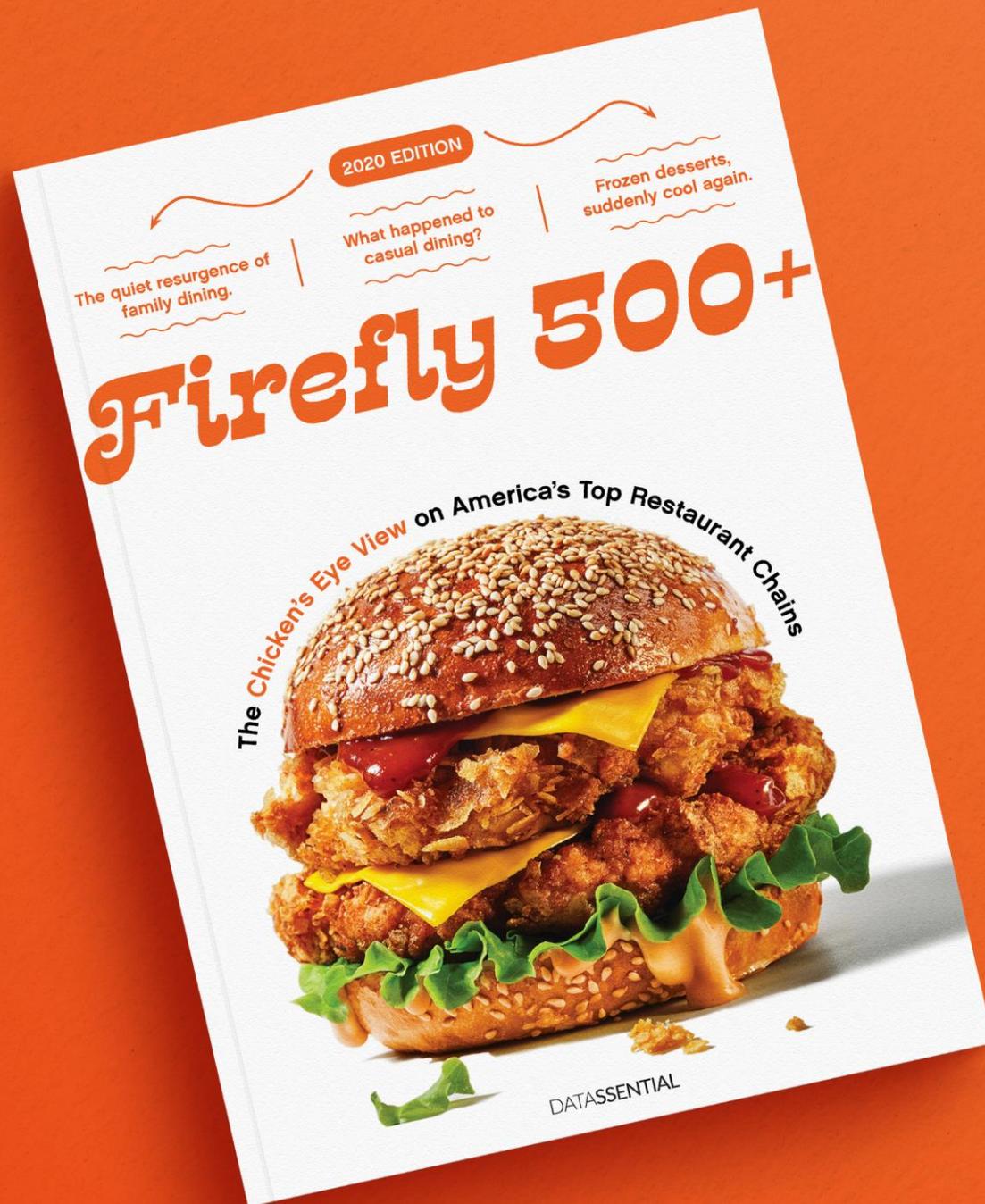


Help us help you.

As the Coronavirus situation continues to evolve rapidly, just tell us what you want to know. If it's something that benefits the food industry, we'll do our best to incorporate it into an upcoming report and provide the results to everyone for free.

And if you have a need that's specific to your company or brand, we would love to design a custom research solution for you.

[click me](#)



America's chain restaurant landscape, reframed in the age of COVID-19.

Datassential's recently-released Firefly 500+ Report dives deep into the metrics of chain restaurant success: annual sales, unit counts, and AUVs; year-over-year growth numbers; and consumer insights from SCORES and BrandFingerprints. This year, the report also includes custom research about COVID-19's impact on the chain restaurant landscape, compiled from March to early May.