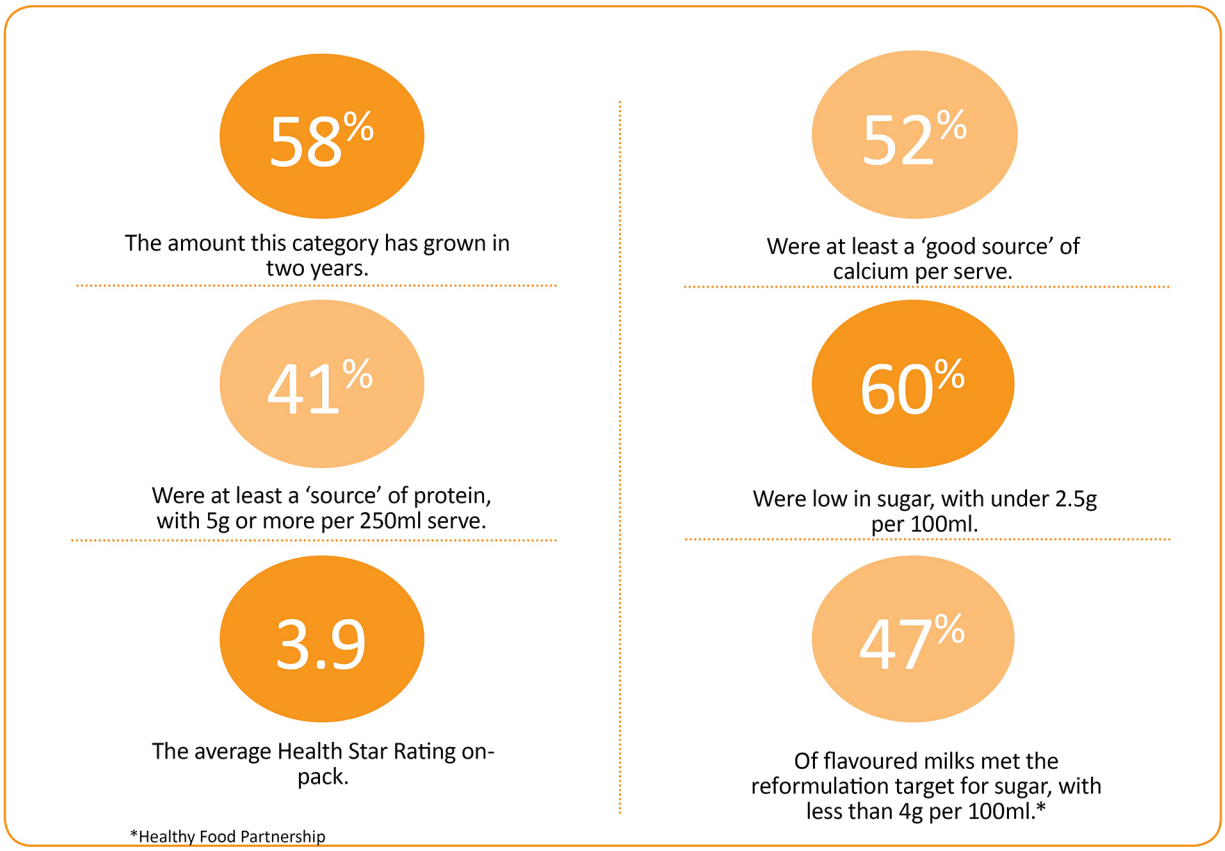
Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council
Cultivating Good Health

GLNC PRODUCT AUDIT HIGHLIGHTS - MILK ALTERNATIVES

JULY 2018

Long-gone are the days where choosing milk was as simple as 'skim or full cream' with the range of plant-based milk alternatives growing in size and variety. In August 2018, GLNC audited 112 milk alternatives from the four major supermarkets in Sydney and by conducting an online search. While this growing category offers endless options, there are some key points to look out for when choosing a milk alternative. Read on for a summary of the audit, with comparisons to skim and full cream dairy milk:

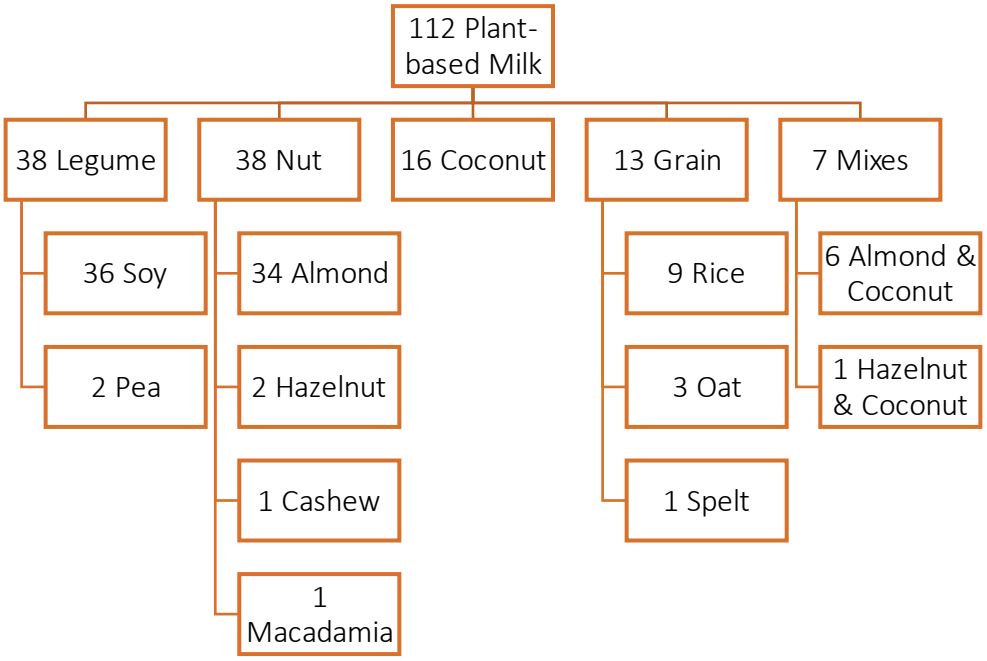


TOP TIPS

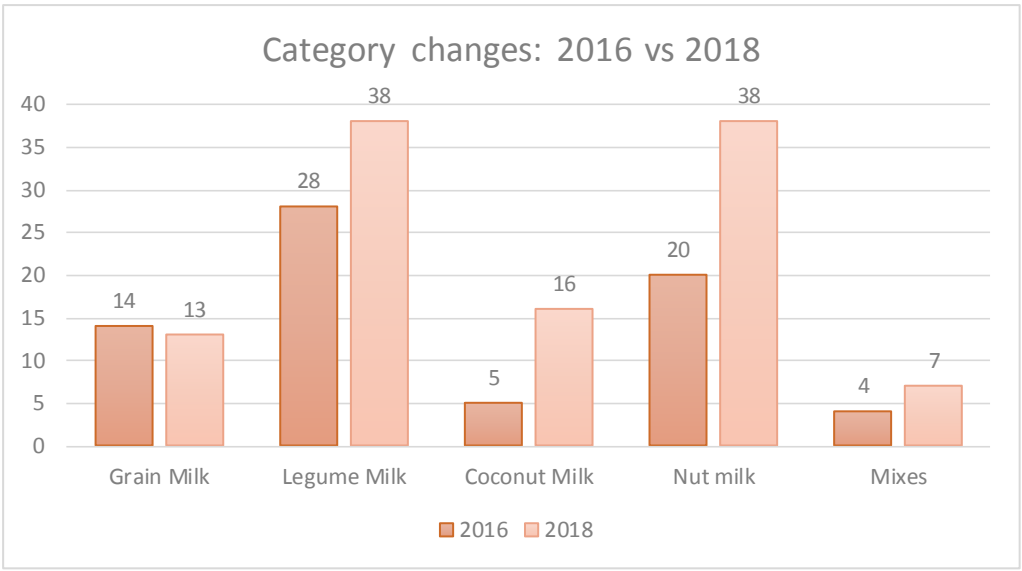
Here's what to look for when buying milk alternatives:
The non-dairy milk category has grown significantly (+58% in two years!), and many products are healthy choices, but there are two main points to be aware of:

- Protein can be very low in plant-based milks
    - Legume milks (e.g. soy) are the best choice in this category, with a similar amount of protein to dairy milk
- Unless they are fortified, plant-based milks are very low in calcium
    - Check the label and choose one with calcium in the nutrition information panel and the ingredients list to make sure you're making a healthy choice

Category breakdown:

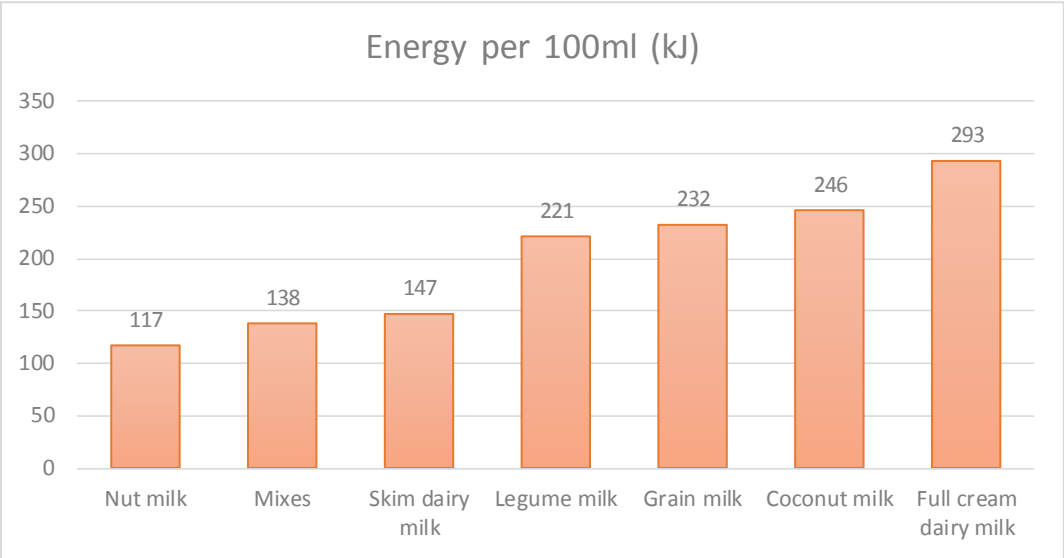


What changes have we seen since the 2016 audit?



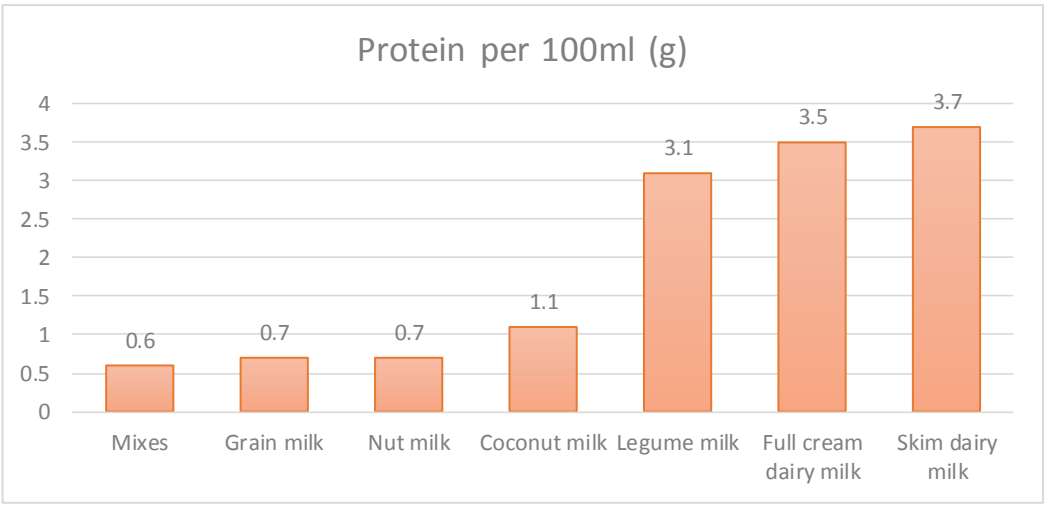
Despite the popularity of options like oat milks, no growth was seen in this category since GLNC's last audit, with one fewer product captured. All other varieties of plant-based milk saw growth; legume milks by 38%, coconut milk by 220%, nut milks by 90%, and mixes by 75%.

Energy:



The most energy-dense plant-based milks were coconut, grain and legume milks, though all were lower than full cream dairy milk. Nut milks and mixes the lowest in energy - similar to skim dairy milk.

Protein:



Legume milks contained the highest protein of all plant-based milks, and were the only ones comparable to full cream and skim dairy milks. All other plant-based milks (coconut, nut, grain and mixes) were significantly lower in protein.

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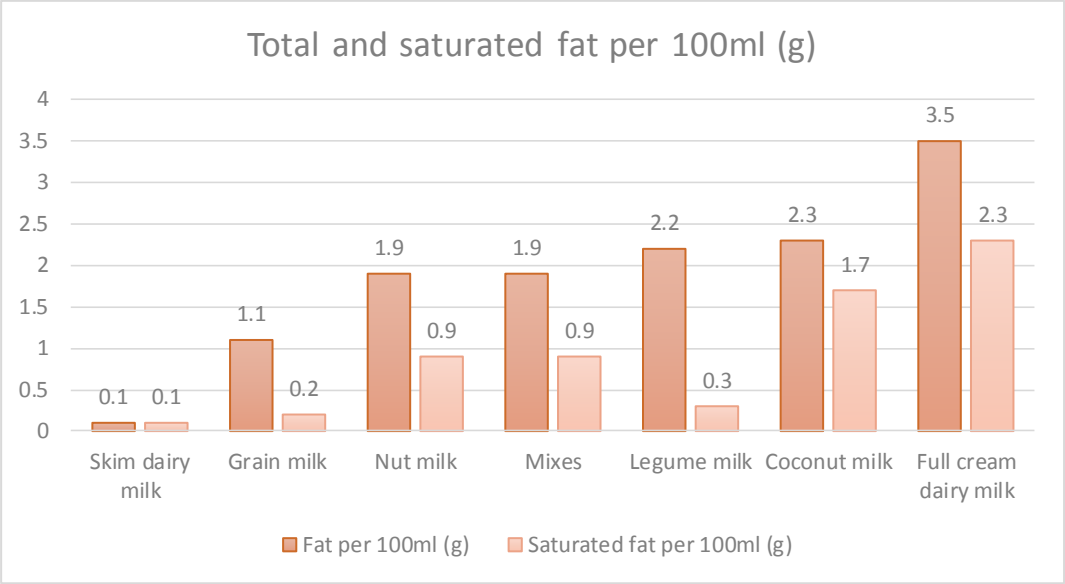
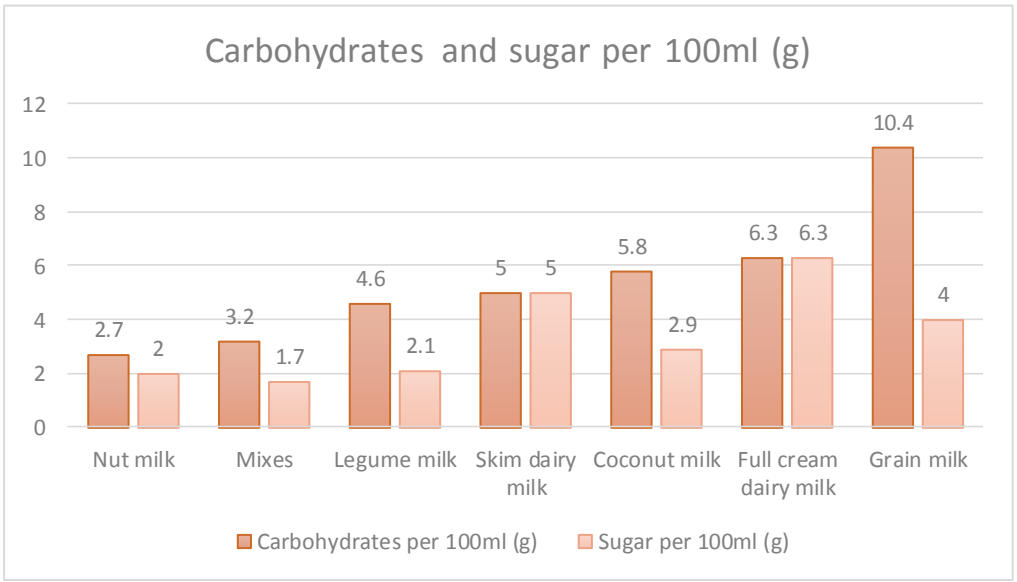
Fat, total and saturated:



All milk alternative products were significantly lower in total and saturated fat when compared to full cream dairy milk, but higher than skim dairy milk.

Coconut milk contained the highest of both fats amongst all products audited, while grain milks contained the lowest.

Carbohydrates and sugar:



Grain milks were highest in carbohydrates, while nut milks and mixes were the lowest in both carbohydrates and sugar.

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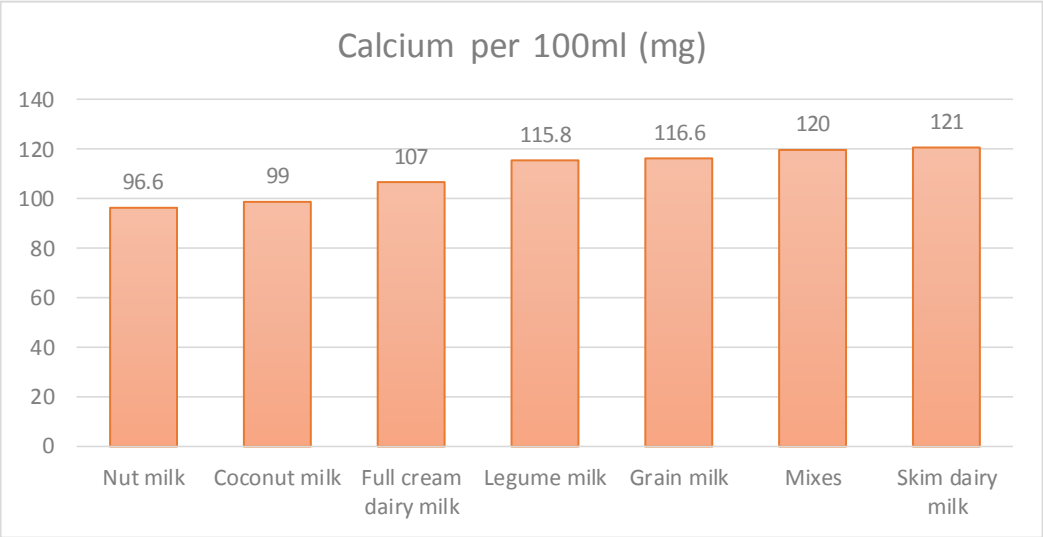
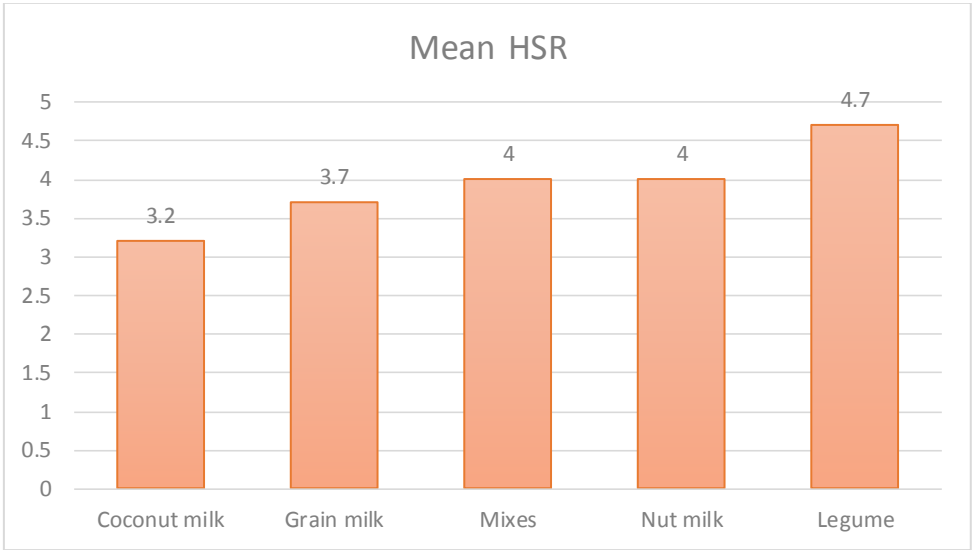
Calcium:



Calcium levels were relatively consistent across categories, however 30% did not state calcium on the Nutrition Information Panel, meaning they may have little, or none of this important mineral. Of those that did state calcium, mixes had the highest on average, which was on par with skim milk. Nut and coconut were the lowest in calcium, but still contained similar levels to that found in full cream dairy milk.

Health Star Rating (HSR):



36% of products displayed a Health Star Rating (HSR), an increase from 21% in the last audit in 2016. Products had an average rating of 3.9 – the highest average rating was seen in legume milks (4.7), and the lowest average rating seen in coconut milks (3.2).