Plant-based revolution expands to unprecedented levels

By Matthew White, chair of the University Caterers Organisation (TUCO) and director of catering, hotel and conferencing at the University of Reading

It’s that time of year when we release our invaluable Global Food and Beverage Trends Report 2019 in association with thefoodpeople.

Now in its third year, the report was launched to a fanfare at our recent summer conference at the University of York. Forming part of our research arm, it was launched under our TUCO banners of grow and #learn. A must-read for all hospitality workers, the report highlights food and drink trends over the past 12 months which have influenced those elusive millenial and gen Z groups.

Identifying global, social and cultural trends which work at an overarching cultural level, the report helps pinpoint what drives food and beverage trends and how caterers can use these to their full advantage. The 12 key overarching trends from 2018 continue but with subtle changes in influence and prominence.

For example, in the ‘health for all’ category, the report finds health is no longer about special diets. It’s not a trend but a lifestyle. The report also recognises two new sub-trends for 2019; clean energy and good carbs.

In the plant-based revolution, the report finds it’s no longer about whether you are vegan or vegetarian; it’s more about reducing your reliance on animal-based products to support your own health and the environment. It finds this category has expanded to “unprecedented levels” with new products being launched daily and is no longer the preserve of niche food outlets or specialist supermarkets.

And that’s what really interests me about these findings. We are continually pushed to provide commercial success within our own operations, and by using market data such as this, we can help navigate the pitfalls and provide a truly innovative and desired campus dining experience.

As an organisation, TUCO strives to deliver real value to its members, and we do this by supporting our peers with global research such as this, as well as our procurement services, our award-winning academy and events throughout the calendar year to help advance knowledge and skills.

We are the leading professional membership body for in-house caterers, and we continue to work to provide quality standards and advice to those working in public sector catering.

To read the full report, please go to www.tuco.ac.uk