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BEEF WATCH ON GLP-1 USE

BEEF WATCH REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2026

Growing use of GLP-1 drugs – Considerations for the beef industry

GLP-1s Are Approved for Weight Loss and Diabetes

GLP-1 Receptor Agonist medications (GLP-1s) are a relatively new class of drugs marketed in Canada since 2010.¹ GLP-1s were initially approved for the treatment of diabetes, however, use of these drugs has risen dramatically in the last few years when it was discovered that they can be extremely effective for weight loss. These drugs, sold under brand names like Ozempic and Wegovy, mimic the GLP-1 hormone, which helps to regulate appetite, hunger and food intake. GLP-1 drugs affect appetite and eating habits, leading to major implications for the food industry and restaurants.

1 in 10 Adults in Canada are Currently on a GLP-1

In 2024, a national survey by Dalhousie University reported an estimated 10% of the adult population in Canada uses a GLP-1.² According to this survey, this represents between 900,000 and 1.4 million Canadians. Market research projects both the Canadian and global markets for GLP-1 drugs will more than double in the next 5 years.^{3,4}

Various Factors are Driving Demand for GLP-1s

Increased use of GLP-1s is being driven by a variety of factors including: growing obesity and diabetes epidemics, the aging population, growing awareness among health professionals and consumers, increasing affordability due to market innovation and competition, and growing use of virtual health platforms. The discovery of new uses for GLP-1 drugs beyond diabetes and obesity (such as for heart, kidney and brain health) is expected to further increase demand.^{5,6}

How GLP-1 Use is Impacting Consumption Behaviour

People on GLP-1s report having smaller appetites, less hunger, less “food noise”, and less desire to consume certain foods, leading to implications for the food industry. Research shows GLP-1s reduce calorie intakes by 16 to 39% and also affect food preferences.⁷ The recent GLP-1 survey by Dalhousie University found that since starting the drug:²

- 45.5% reported eating less.
- 21.6% claimed to eat out at restaurants less often.
- 16.4% declared buying fewer groceries.

The survey also explored the types of food GLP-1 users eat less of.²

- About 30% said they ate fewer sweet treats and snacks.
- 29% said they drank fewer carbonated soft drinks, and 19% said they drank less alcohol.
- 21% said they reduced their intake of meat products.
- Only 14% reported no change.

Protein Foods Matter for People on GLP-1s

While people on GLP-1s generally eat less food and calories, their protein and nutrient needs remain high.⁷ It is especially important for people on GLP-1s to prioritize protein to help prevent muscle and bone loss while losing weight.⁷ Meat, fish and poultry contain more protein per serving than other protein foods like eggs, dairy foods (like milk, yogurt, or cheese), and many plant-based proteins like beans or peas.

Insights and Opportunities for the Beef Industry

Given beef’s protein and nutrient density, beef is well suited to helping people on GLP-1s meet their protein and nutrient needs. Research suggests that consumers may inherently understand this. A study published in 2026⁸ found GLP-1 use increases consumers’ willingness-to-pay for meat products, and a mind-shift change from quantity to quality. This “premiumization pattern” presents an opportunity for the beef industry to capitalize on higher value and premium cuts.

Canada Beef recently completed a White Paper research review on GLP-1s and Diet to inform a strategy to help the Canadian beef industry address this growing demographic.



References:

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- (2) Dalhousie University, Agri-Food Analytics Lab. 2024. [Impact of GLP-1 drugs on consumer eating habits and food industry trends](#).
- (3) Grand View Research. 2025. [Canada Glp-1 receptor agonist market size & outlook](#).
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- (5) Cleveland Clinic. 2023. [GLP-1 agonists](#).
- (6) Lin HT et al. Neurodegeneration and stroke after semaglutide and tirzepatide in patients with diabetes and obesity. *JAMA* 2025;8(7):e2521016.
- (7) Mozaffarian D et al. Nutritional priorities to support GLP-1 therapy for obesity: A joint Advisory from the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, the American Society for Nutrition, the Obesity Medicine Association, and The Obesity Society. *Obesity* 2025;DOI: 10.1002/oby.24336.
- (8) Bina J et al. [GLP-1 use and protein demand](#). *Food Policy* 2026;138,103026