

2023

Trends Report



*feeding the minds
that feed the world*



IFT's Science and Policy Team Forecasts Six Trends for 2023

From a processed foods comeback to breaking food system silos and addressing food and nutrition security, our science and policy experts identify top science of food trends.

IFT's Science and Policy team has zeroed in on important trends for the science of food in the year ahead. We've connected the dots from processed foods and global food system silos to food safety hazards, supply chain constraints, sustainability efforts, and more. Creative food science solutions will be essential to continuously deliver safe, nutritious, and sustainable foods. While the last few years have been challenging, we expect the food science and technology community to rally together to produce novel solutions in complex times. Read on for the most need-to-know trends for 2023.

Processed foods are set for a comeback:

Increased consumer demand for products that meet nutrition, health, and environmental priorities has positioned processed foods for a resurgence. Processing to reduce food waste, developing novel ingredients and product innovation, extending shelf life, and increasing nutrient bioavailability are essential to feeding a global population that now exceeds eight billion. Processed foods are part of the solution. The future includes ingredient and product innovation that

delivers a nutritious, available, affordable, accessible, and acceptable food supply. While how food is made matters, the focus will shift to what it provides.

Breaking food system silos will trend across sectors:

Synchronizing regulations, standards, and industry best practices is increasingly trending across academia, industry groups, governments, and nongovernmental organizations. This approach requires multi-stakeholder collaboration that crosses borders and segments of the food system and is essential to improving resiliency and transparency. Harmonization of laws, food safety processes, research data, and traceability principles all promote trade and improve flexibility during a crisis. Breaking silos across the food system will be a trend in public, private, and governmental organizations.

Six Trends

Expect a global agenda on food and nutrition security:

The trend toward a more equitable food supply will be accompanied by a push around the world to define “healthy”—from nutrient content claims and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing to educating consumers and guiding food producers. Active engagement from food science professionals will be essential in developing new policies and promoting a greater understanding of their impact on food innovation. From the FAO to the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, global forums on dietary guidelines, nutrition and health, and food security in 2022 have set the stage for next year and beyond.

Look for a heightened focus on food safety:

Disruption, recalls, and subsequent food shortages in recent years highlight the need for an increased focus on food safety. The USDA expects to release proposed rules to reduce Salmonella infections, while the FDA continues to develop commodity-specific prevention strategies to limit outbreaks in FDA-regulated foods. FDA’s Closer to Zero: Action Plan for Baby Foods and the EPA’s per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (known as PFAS) strategies will prioritize research and mitigation of heavy metals and other chemical hazards. Expect the FDA to evolve its focus on food safety and nutrition, bringing to life recommendations from the Reagan-Udall Foundation’s Operational Evaluation of the FDA Human Foods Program.

Food science and technology will rise to meet supply chain challenges:

The global supply chain will continue to be impacted by shifting socioeconomics, evolving consumer demands, and complex food system bottlenecks. It will be vital to build resilient supply chains that balance global and local sourcing, investing in essential innovations, supply chain and digital technologies and traceability, and new ways to drive efficiencies across the global food system. The creative solutions that food science and technologists developed over the past few years will strengthen the ability of the food industry to thrive and manage future challenges.

Sustainability will remain a focus:

With significant recent investment in sustainability from corporations and government, we anticipate a robust pipeline of breakthrough technologies promoting sustainable practices to promote a climate-smart future. Recent policies and events such as the European Green Deal, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change Conference (COP27), sustainability packaging claims and investment groups, ESG reporting, and more will only strengthen the push toward greater action on climate change worldwide. Look for a focus on upcycling, food waste reduction/zero waste, carbon neutrality, and efforts that tackle food insecurity.

Did you know IFT proactively serves as an objective voice in public dialogue on food and nutrition-related issues?

IFT’s Science and Policy team is focused on advocating for science-based outcomes and increased funding in the science of food. The team does so through various mechanisms, including developing white papers, hosting events, and responding to public calls for comments about various policy-related matters.

Read more about IFT’s engagement in areas related to their trend predictions, including the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health and the FDA’s Food Traceability Rule, at [IFT.org/policy-and-advocacy](https://ift.org/policy-and-advocacy).



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