

Food Supply Chain: Sustainability and Ethics

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In years to come, assessment of sustainability will become more relevant for the food industry. Its predominantly based on sustainable agricultural production and relevant food processing schemes. Companies should employ efficient production; processing; distribution systems that overall safeguard quality, assure safety, and promote fair and transparent distribution of created value. Consumer should access wholesome-healthy food at acceptable prices; and sustainable development of rural communities should be integral part of the company policy.

Companies that do not have sustainable technologies available to improve their environmental practices but operate in highly sensitive places are always at risk. As a part of overall supply chain management, companies should work with clean technologies and should support the environmental efforts by introducing strict standards.

One of the foremost challenge to food industry is to ensure a safe and abundant food supply, and contributing to healthier population. There is a need to formulate, design, process, and label food to help the average consumer live on a healthier diet, moving away from obesity and diet-related diseases. In this context, it becomes imperative to upgrade the role and impact of food sciences in the sustainable food supply chain. This would increase visibility, responsibility, and effectiveness on feeding the starving population groups all over the world, including the “developed” countries.

From the perspective of food safety, securing adequate and safe food, at the primary production level, requires reorientation of production schemes toward sustainable methods, moving away from intensification-induced food crises. Sustainable processing calls for minimal (often non-thermal) processes with low energy inputs and minimal mass/quality losses, with due respect to environmental issues. From the consumer perspective, awareness of real values in food in terms of nutrition quality and safety is required. Finally, there is a great deal of corporate responsibility for proper design and fair marketing of foods that promote consumer health and well-being.

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