

2. Future of the food sector until 2030 and expected developments for companies



The great importance of the food chain for the Dutch economy and for consumers is obvious. The food sector tries to perform its task in the most efficient way possible, and consumers profit from this in the form of more affordable meals.

Yet the question still remains of whether the food industry can carry on like this. In the long term, there will be more needed to serve the needs of the sector itself, its consumers and their surroundings and the environment. The chain is too supply-driven and focuses too much on price. This is likely to adversely affect the health of consumers and of companies, innovation and quality, but also the environment.

Despite the high added value of the food sector, there is still a danger of a negative spiral. Fierce competition in scale, costs and pricing will damage all players. The question is, what options are available for escaping this negative spiral?

What opportunities should entrepreneurs grasp to improve their own situation and that of the sector?

Trends

In order to map out the challenges facing the food sector in the coming years, trend analysis has been conducted to show which trends will play an important role in the next 20 years and how they will influence the food chain.

Based on an analysis of the future of the food system and the food sector (until 2030), the most important trends have been predicted.

Table 1: Depiction of the trends (source of actual text, in Dutch): ING report *Food 2030*

Trends	
An increasing global population will have a greater demand for food in 2030. At the same time, greater differentiation will be required due to an aging population and individualisation. Innovation is needed to meet this demand.	Good behaviour in the form of sustainability is also an important aspect for food. In business, people are increasingly recognising the power of sustainable business models.
The economic balance is shifting. Food is becoming an important asset for nations. Competition in the food sector is increasing, with costs, efficiency, scale and power dominating.	Technology will play an extremely important role in the ability to supply a larger, more differentiated and sustainable demand for food, relevant to all links within the sector and for the consumer at home.
There is also another side to food; the story side, where the link is made to emotional and sensory aspects. These aspects are at the core of trends like real food and local food. Trends such as ease, pleasure and health also play a role.	Governments have an important policy and regulatory function in food. This will only increase in importance due to new technology and societal issues such as sustainability, health and fair trade.

Questions to be answered

This overview of the 5 most important themes for the main trends in the world of food up until 2030 provides us with an insight into what the main questions will be for company development in the food sector in the future.

Table 2: Overview of the most important themes for future business development in the food sector

Themes for main trends in food until 2030	Question	Development extremes options
Supply and demand	How is the growing and differentiated demand being met?	Push versus pull
Supply chain	How will the conflicts in the chain be conducted in the future?	Power versus cooperation
CSR	From which perspective will sustainability be stimulated and how far will they go?	Profit versus social role
Technology	How far can or should we go when it comes to food?	High tech versus high tech not leading and, to a certain degree, limited
Regulations	Is quantity and price most important or health?	Food security versus food safety
