The history of food goes hand in hand with the history of people, shifting and evolving in unison over the centuries. The way the term itself has evolved is testimony to this: originally perceived purely as a source of nourishment, food gradually took on medicinal connotations, coming to be regarded as a resource that could treat and cure illness.

Over time food became associated with pleasure and the celebration of taste as an experience, mutating to extremes to become a remedy for stress. Nowadays the notion of food is closely tied to the concept of equilibrium, of finding a balance between good taste and health to achieve the perfect diet.

The concept of food and diet is therefore constantly evolving, as are individual habits and behaviors, driving companies and brands to innovate and modernize their processes and products in order to stay relevant and to cater to these rising demands.

There is no love sincerer than the love of food.
Welcome to the Future of Food.

Historic events inevitably lead to an acceleration of change. In our work to support brands to rise to the challenges of future trends, it is only natural that we address these complex scenarios in order to gain the valuable insights needed to ensure safe navigation, even through turbulent times.

We have therefore examined the impact of a number of phenomena – such as generational change, new lifestyles, health and, of course, the Covid-19 virus – on our field of expertise, the food and beverage market.

By studying and analyzing current trends and the various global markets, and by carrying out ad hoc interviews with sector professionals in both Italy and abroad, we have identified a series of macro-trends in the sector which will empower companies to seize the opportunities hidden within the transformations now taking place. The themes analyzed in the Future of Food report have been specifically selected to help our clients, and food operators in general, to observe the world not from above but from within, in order to identify with consumers and meet their needs efficiently and in step with the new lifestyles.
Why read The Future of Food

FutureBrand constantly monitors the socio-economic changes that impact brands, gathering precious insights which help to inform the brand strategies it manages.

Our unique experience in the food sector is well-recognized by the market and continually updated thanks to a regular exchange of data and information with our global network partners. It is further enhanced by our dialogue with some of the sector’s leading representatives.

In order to be «future proof», companies and brands need to know how to harvest and interpret the increasingly complex and fragmented signals that consumers provide. This Report offers a unique analysis of the current and ongoing phenomena in this field.

This Report provides a privileged perspective of the trends and developments currently taking place in the food & beverage sector, one of the most important segments in the Italian economy, and one which involves a huge number of operators.
The Future of Food examines 5 macro trends in the food industry which are fundamental to an understanding of purchase drivers for the next 5/10 years. This in-depth analysis has revealed a clear, objective picture of the food sector and a number of growth opportunities for brands. The journey begins in 2020, a year zero for many sectors, including the food industry.

It has been a year of interruption and transformation, forcing us to take a step back and reflect on shifts in consumer behavior and attitudes, for these shifts are capable of shaping purchase drivers in the years to come.

01/
The reinventing revolution
2020: the changing food industry is here to stay

02/
The ethical dilemma
The tough choice between convenience and sustainability

03/
The power of food
Healthy mind, healthy body

04/
Flavor migration
From the global to the new local: the evolution of culinary traditions

05/
The new natural
From fruits of the earth to fruits of the lab
01/ The reinventing revolution
2020: the changing food industry is here to stay

The key word in 2020 has been «change». While the pandemic has radically transformed our way of life, fueling trends and generating new ones, we need to get used to the idea that change is here to stay.

The virus, sparing no country across the globe, has marked the beginning of an all-out revolution, one which will force the entire food industry – agriculture, retail and even hospitality – to rejuvenate, and to do so fast.

Our habits have transformed, and we have returned to activities we had almost given up, like cooking elaborate dishes or making homemade bread. At the same time, we have widened our horizons, taking pleasure in experimenting with new types of cuisine, made possible by delivery services. We have also created our own very personal supply chains, a more or less complex system involving a network of distant but trusted producers, corner shops, large-scale retail channels offering home deliveries, and ‘smart farmers’. And digitalization clearly made it possible for us to get through the crisis, even in terms of food.
CLOSER THAN EVER
More than ever before, today’s consumers make
decisions about which brands to put their trust
in. This trend has already been in progress for some
years, but people now have a concrete
and well-articulated awareness of both their needs
and their rights. Demands for transparency
and honesty can no longer be disregarded,
and brands cannot limit their efforts to an attitude
of bonhomie. Consumers are engaged in exchanging
views and advice, reporting misleading claims,
and much more. They also expect brands to take
a stand on important themes ranging from safety
to respect for the environment, and even current
political issues. Specifically, these issues include
consumer health protection – more pressing
than ever –, animal welfare, the demand
for a reduction in plastic packaging, and distancing
from companies that exploit farm workers or
destroy the ecosystem with intensive plantations.
These are serious matters that demand equally
serious responses if companies are to avoid losing
the greatest asset for any brand, consumer trust.
In response to these demands, some companies
are taking their retail store experiences directly
to customers’ homes, delivering their products
and their associated emotions in complete safety.
This allows them to create a powerful synergy
with customers and establish a solid, long-lasting
relationship with them, one that will endure beyond
the pandemic.

01/ HOME EXPERIENCES
As an alternative to visiting the Magnum Pleasure Store,
where customers can design their own ice-creams, a kit
of sticks and toppings is now available to allow families
to get creative in the comfort of their own home.
The experience is made possible by the partnership
between Magnum and Deliveroo, the company entrusted
with delivering the DIY ice-cream kits.

02/ DELICIOUS ENTERTAINMENT
Häagen-Dazs has partnered with
Secret Cinema to launch a weekly home
entertainment series. A newsletter informs
customers about the film of the week
and how to access the «Secret Sofa»
screenings. Users get a special code
so they can order the Häagen-Dazs flavor
of the week through Amazon Prime Now.
WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER
Initiatives in the food sector are not only focused on consumer needs. They also support those sectors that have been worst hit by the pandemic, like hospitality. “All Together” is a digital platform that connects breweries with bars and restaurants, enabling them to share their experiences and learn more about each other. The “sharing is caring” sentiment has also been transformed by chefs who have shaken off the unapproachable Hollywood celebrity image to form a closer rapport with their customers, interacting and sharing valuable content with them: from shopping lessons to tips on how to cook tasty, healthy dishes.

SAFETY FIRST
Confirming its recent growth trend, e-commerce has risen to second place in the league of the biggest-expanding sales channels, with a surge in sales of almost 180 million euros in 2020 (Coop Report, 2020). Today’s consumers are inclined to turn to online shopping, above all, because they perceive it to be a safe and reassuring channel. Brand names need to make quality products available everywhere, at any time, relieving consumers from having to venture out for their shopping needs.

ALL IN THE SAME BOAT
Breweries from around the world launch an open source IPA beer to support hospitality professionals. Any craft brewery, in whatever location, can download the open source recipe and label to join the All Together project, as long as they donate a portion of their proceeds to an organization that supports hospitality workers.

03/
ALL IN THE SAME BOAT
Breweries from around the world launch an open source IPA beer to support hospitality professionals. Any craft brewery, in whatever location, can download the open source recipe and label to join the All Together project, as long as they donate a portion of their proceeds to an organization that supports hospitality workers.

04/
CHEF SECRETS SHARED
Well-known Bolivian chefs Alejandra Peredo, Javier Libera, Ricordo Cortez, Markus Ruegg and Ramón Freixa offer a shopping guide and a recipe book that reveals how to make three meals a week without spending a fortune.

05/
SUPERMARKET 5.0
Shopping in times of Covid-19 has never been easier. One single aisle, strictly one way, provides all the products you need to survive during lockdown. Being able to do your shopping on your own in a 1.5m wide aisle means no queues and less time spent in-store.

06/
ONLINE GROCERY (ONLY)
The online farmers’ market, Cortilia, selects the best producers and artisans to bring rural shopping to the home. Their mission is to bring quality food produce directly to all those consumers seeking excellence, starting from their choice of raw materials.
«We like to have everything under control, but life can change suddenly, steering us in new and unexpected directions. This is what Covid-19 has taught us. Life has clearly become the number one priority and for this reason we are moving ever closer to nature. There is no doubt that we are going to have to become more aware of the use of technology in order to better respect the earth: the way in which we approach food will be better informed. We are finally ready to see the world in a different way, from the right perspective.»

Rafael Osterling
CHEF
Physical shops will never die out completely, but they will have to evolve

Alessandra Corsi
MARKETING DIRECTOR AND MDD, CONAD

WHAT IMPACT HAS COVID-19 HAD ON THE RETAIL SECTOR, AND WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE FUTURE?
There is no doubt that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on the sector. However, this impact reflects trends that were already underway. It is the way these trends are manifested that has changed.

In the food sector, and in the consumer goods industry in general, we can identify five main macro trends: Health & Wellness, Sustainability, Service, Taste/Indulgence, and Affordability. The strategic assets on which the food industry is based have always been well-defined and solid, but their significance, speed and manifestation have all altered as a result of the pandemic.

During the two-month lockdown period, for example, affordability became less important than it was in the pre-Covid-19 era, because customers were not inclined to linger in shops and were keen to finish their shopping as quickly as possible, therefore paying less attention to prices. In the period immediately after the lockdown, and ever since then, economic circumstances have brought the affordability factor back into the spotlight. This has further accelerated the growth of discount stores which are now catering to customer needs more than ever before, having gradually improved the quality of their goods, particularly in the private label and fresh goods departments. The Health & Wellness sector has also grown in customer priorities, and has shifted to accommodate the demand for greater protection of safety and personal health. There is therefore a growing perception of food as a means of prevention and we have seen a growth in all those products containing nutrients that support the immune system. As for non-food goods, there has been a surge in demand for antibacterial cleaning products.

WILL THE TRENDS THAT HAVE EMERGED DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS TAKE HOLD?
«Covid-19 has not created new trends in the consumer goods industry; it has simply changed the significance and speed of the macro trends that were already underway, sometimes modifying the way they manifest themselves.»
for the home and personal hygiene.
For food service products, on the other hand, there has been a decline in the demand for short shelf-life produce (mainly fresh produce) but a growth in the frozen foods department. This is because consumers have reduced the frequency of their shopping trips and are stocking up and increasing their basket size, so they are prone to buying products with a longer shelf-life. Growth in sales of comfort foods also gathered pace during lockdown, with sweet spreads and wine at the top of the table. All these factors give rise to an ongoing polarization of consumer habits, one that was already underway prior to the pandemic.

On the one hand customers are looking for good value on basic and mainstream products, while on the other, independent of income bracket, they are seeking out higher quality products with particular sensory characteristics.

Sustainability has grown in importance as a result of the pandemic, not only in environmental terms (we have all seen the results of the lockdown on nature and the environment and are therefore more aware of the impact of humans on the planet), but also from a social and economic perspective: now more than ever, companies are waking up to the increasing importance of their mission and their values in the social sphere: along with protecting the planet, people are the new priority.

As for purchase trends, it is clear that customers opted for safer methods, preferring on-line shopping, stores properly equipped to ensure social distancing, and more packaged goods over loose produce. The impact of this has been the acceleration of digitalization and a shift in competitive dynamics between retailers and sales channels. Looking at digitalization, in Italy the number of families buying consumer goods online today is around 9 million, and the value of purchases has grown by 131% (Nielsen, Oct 2020), with a more than proportionate rise in click & collect services. These absolute values still only represent around 1.5% of the total value of consumer goods, and are likely to grow to around 5% in the next few years. Retailers must therefore respond quickly and adequately to this demand.

«Sustainability has grown in importance as a result of the pandemic, not only in environmental terms, but also from a social and economic perspective: now more than ever, companies are waking up to the increasing importance of their mission and their values in the social sphere: along with protecting the planet, people are the new priority.»
WHICH FOOD CATEGORIES DO YOU THINK WILL GROW MOST SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE FUTURE?
Assuming that the principal macro trends will remain unaltered, it is difficult to make specific long-term forecasts about individual categories. We can, however, identify some groups of categories that saw considerable growth during the Covid-19 crisis which will stay relevant in the near future. These include products for personal safety, such as those for personal and household hygiene and prevention, healthy foods, comfort foods, and products for home cooking (for as long as restaurant services are restricted).

Looking ahead in the long-term, however, it is likely that there will be growth in sustainable products, in the widest sense of the term, and we forecast that consumers will increasingly reward those Italian and local products and brands which are also sensitive to social and environmental causes.

REGARDING THE RETAIL SECTOR, WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INNOVATIONS IN THE SECTOR?
The retail sector, like other sectors, must respond rapidly to the challenges posed by the new situation, adapting their business models accordingly, and this will inevitably give rise to new equilibriums. Innovation in competitive strategies, digitalization and sustainability will all be crucial to determining the success of a store. In particular, retailers must innovate by optimizing their selection of goods and adopting new perspectives. In doing so, they need to consider that customers want to avoid spending time on boring purchases from undistinctive shelves of mainstream products, that they are increasingly value conscious, but that they are also certainly attracted by new purchase experiences targeted to their needs, and integrated between online and offline channels. One of the most important investments for retailers will therefore necessarily be in digitalization, not only in order to be competitive in e-commerce – which we see as a service rather than an actual sales channel – but also to be more efficient from a business point of view. Through digitalization, retailers will also be able to streamline all those activities that aim to get to know customers better and to meet their specific needs in a personalized manner, in order to create a tailor-made offer of products and services, integrating physical and virtual retail spaces. In fact, the retail sector in the form of physical shops will never die out completely, but it will have to evolve and adapt, and the new technologies are an important tool to allow it to do so. Lastly, sustainability represents a huge challenge for all businesses, not only in the retail sector, and not only from an environmental perspective. Today’s goal has to be to create value for people, and not just for those with a commercial interest.

Conad’s business activities are centered around people. We continually strive towards forging a sincere and lasting relationship with them, a relationship that goes “beyond things”, because our customers are people above all else, members of the communities in which we work, part and parcel of the local neighborhoods and economies. They all have individual needs that must be identified and catered to.

We believe in generating value from both a social and an economic perspective. That is our mantra. That is our mission.
Innovative cooking, in sustainable harmony with the planet, with an eye to the future and its roots in culture and tradition

Rafael Osterling
CHEF - PERÚ

WHAT IS THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND YOUR RESTAURANTS?
None of my restaurants resemble the others; each one is unique in its own way, with its own distinguishing personality. My first restaurant, Rafael, represents my vision as a chef, my perception of the art of cooking as a whole: it is a competent blend of techniques, skills, tradition and culture. El Mercado on the other hand, is a tribute to my homeland and my origins, though in the form of a modern and contemporary Peruvian restaurant. Felix is a modern brasserie with Peruvian traits. «Oficial» aims to combine raw, simple ingredients with traditional Peruvian cooking. There is however a common feature which connects all my restaurants, and that is the search for natural, organic products. I’m committed to cooperating with local producers, I’m curious about their stories and together we define how to create added value in every dish. To establish a network with the producers, and encourage the use of organic ingredients and green technologies, that is the aim, in order to alleviate our footprint on the planet and adopt a transparent, sustainable process.

DO YOU FEEL THE ROLE OF THE CHEF WILL BE REINVENTED AFTER COVID?
Today’s priorities have clearly changed, and as a consequence the role of the chef needs to be rewritten: Chefs are not «stars» anymore, nor histrionic characters aiming at showcasing a performance. Nowadays we are called on to play a different part, to meet and interact with our customers in innovative ways. The key is to adapt, or better still reinvent ourselves, according to customers’ needs. We are asked to be ambassadors of a new way of perceiving food and nutrition: our aim should be to encourage healthier food choices and high-quality ingredients.

«Millennials will be the pioneers of new trends: they will be the spark that ignites all movements to renew the sector. In fact, industry alone does not change, it adapts: it is the people, therefore, with their changes, who are the architects of the food revolution we will witness»

#foodinsight
which can combine taste and health. That is the future. We need to fill the gap between us and the people, sharing knowledge and fostering a more authentic relationship.

COVID19 AND THE FOOD INDUSTRY: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE WILL HOLD? Covid-19 has certainly accelerated some processes and trends: delivery is currently booming, while many restaurants have, unfortunately, closed. We are all asked to reinvent ourselves. That means first and foremost to be open to new tools and resources. For example, we have seen a surge in demand for semi-prepared foods that can be completed at home. This is one kind of diverse experience a restaurant can offer, which can be consumed at home. What amazes me even more is the chance to adapt by responding to the community’s needs: lots of restaurants have been preparing meals for those in need and the categories worst hit by the crisis. Moreover, they also worked for those on the emergency frontline, like members of the police, hospital and assistance service workers. The food industry has discovered that it can play a fundamental role in society, making a new commitment to actively contribute to its progress and wellbeing.

WHICH FOOD CATEGORIES DO YOU THINK WILL GROW MOST SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE FUTURE? Peru is one of the few countries which use no transgenic products. Transgenic methods standardize production, in order to produce more, but we are already overproducing in our society and create too much waste. Instead we should be focusing on respect for what we produce, giving value to it, not only for plant-based products, but also in the farm animals sector. Consumers are more and more concerned about these matters: they are more aware about what they eat and the production processes involved. The whole industry needs to adapt to the new needs and insights, and in doing so, develop a more conscious and sustainable approach.

WHICH BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES DO YOU THINK WILL IMPACT THE FOOD INDUSTRY? When we saw a Vegan 40 years ago we thought it was weird. Now the trend has shifted and eating meat is almost strange. Trends are evolving, and the so-called «Hipsters» have contributed to establishing sustainability as one of the hot-topics in our era. Today we eat in a more conscious way, we focus more on the ingredients and, consequently, the planet and its biodiversity. We are learning to eat better, maybe less, certainly in a more selective way. The Millennials are going to set the trends for the future. They represent 40% of consumers and will be the spark of progress: the industry will not change itself. Consumers will be the ones to change it.
02/ The ethical dilemma

The tough choice between convenience and sustainability

Consumers are more and more careful when it comes to purchase choices, not only in terms of their own wellbeing, but also of that of the planet. In fact, they recognise that one of their main purchase drivers is sustainability. The impact a product might have on the environment, on plant and animal life and/or on humans has become so important to consumers that it can determine a shift in the perception of a brand.

Interestingly, though, market research indicates that «convenience» is the uncontested number one purchase driver in the food sector. In fact, the convenience factor – the simplicity and speed of purchase and consumption – often determines the preference for a particular product over another.

So how can brands cater to both these needs?
GOOD & SMART
Some brands have found a smart solution for products in the wellbeing sector. Whether working from home or from the office, people have no time to cook for the family, but still want to eat meals that are good for them and which are easy and quick to prepare. Tapping into this demand, Daily Harvest has enjoyed enormous success in Great Britain by offering soups, smoothies and vegetables delivered directly to the home or the office.

BEETTER TOGETHER
The lockdown period confirmed the success of meal delivery and takeaway services, both of which saw an unprecedented boom in business. This surge is no doubt due to the restrictions imposed to contain the spread of the virus: confined to their homes and reluctant to go back to restaurants immediately after the end of lockdown, consumers discovered the potential of food delivery. The service is a powerful resource, enabling people to carry on enjoying convivial meals, to indulge in a special dish, perhaps in new and innovative ways. It also provides a welcome break from the cooking, an activity rediscovered during lockdown.

01/ GRAB & GO
The Peckish philosophy: «We believe that eggs are nature’s perfect food! Which is why we founded PECKISH: fresh, ready-to-eat whole foods that champion the brilliant simplicity of eggs. PECKISH offers convenience without compromising on nutrition or taste – because you shouldn’t have to.»

02/ EASY MEAL
Daily Harvest is a delivery service that has won over countless customers in Great Britain, thanks to their easy-to-order ready-made frozen soups, oats, and smoothies. In their own words: «We partner with farmers who don’t settle for anything less than the sweetest, heartiest, most nourishing fruits and vegetables. We freeze everything within hours of harvest, to lock in peak-season goodness and nutrients.»

03/ NEW DELIVERY
JoyRun describes itself as an easy way to get what you want in your community. The peer-to-peer platform makes the delivery process more affordable and efficient by showing buyers activity in their area so that they can place an order on someone else’s run. Joy Run also offers runners the chance to earn money by letting people nearby place orders on the same run. It’s the app that rewards you for helping customers and runners.

PECKISH, U.S.A.
DAILY HARVEST, U.K.
DELIVEROO, SINGAPORE

Who says a food delivery company can only deliver food? Deliveroo is driving change with its 40-seat dining space launched in Singapore. The space is served by 10 kitchens and boasts 11 different restaurant concepts and 7 different operators, offering diners a completely automated «futuristic» experience where no interaction is needed at all.
In the world of hospitality and delivery, new brands are being created to satisfy the need to guarantee the complete safety of food and beverages. Single-use compostable packaging is therefore in great demand. The Italian company Foodpack Green has created its Tusibio line which offers smart packaging solutions which are safe and, above all, green.

Nestlé has announced that all its confectionary bars will be wrapped in 100% recyclable packaging by 2025. Plastic wrappers used for KitKat Mini have already been replaced by recyclable origami paper.

Barnana offer a range of snacks made from a premium mix of upcycled bananas (imperfect bananas that would otherwise go to waste), mangoes and goldenberries. The snacks are dehydrated instead of being cooked or fried, thus making them healthier.

The Blend is a brand from Raised & Rooted offering patties of Angus beef blended with vegetable protein obtained from peas. It is an alternative for those seeking a balanced intake of meat and vegetables. «Whether you’re a flexitarian, vegetarian or carnivore - or just want to be healthier - we believe the food you eat should taste good and be good for you.»

NOTHING GOES TO WASTE
Despite being put on hold by the pandemic, sustainability still remains a long-term objective for brands. Every new product launch represents a test bench for alternative ways of increasing brand sustainability. This commitment consists in developing compostable packaging, recycling food waste, or even offering support for people looking to reduce their meat consumption without giving up the pleasures of a hamburger.
GOOD VALUE AND GREEN
More than ever before, affordability and sustainability are two inextricable concepts: holistic wellbeing and smart services must go hand in hand. This is why several companies, including Babaco, now provide consumers with home-delivered, quality fruit and vegetables normally discarded by supermarkets because of their unattractive appearance. It is a concrete and efficient way for consumers to make good use of otherwise wasted produce while also keeping an eye on the household budget.

Gander is an app that provides real-time updates about reduced price food products in the local area. Having joined forces with the Spar supermarket chain, it enables consumers to map their shops, filter produce by food type and identify and select unmissable offers.

Snact offers a range of snacks with banana skins as their basic ingredient. The brand teamed up with Tipa to create 100% compostable wrappers, inviting customers to «throw the wrapper into the garden and watch it decompose».

Babaco Market home delivers fruit and vegetables like you’ve never seen before: products with minor defects, quirky shapes and smaller-than-usual sizes, which are rejected by traditional channels like supermarkets and for this reason often destined to be discarded.
The food industry is more dynamic and open to dialogue today than ever before. Consumers are not only seeking to satisfy a primary need; through the product they are on a quest for added values to enhance their experience, whether these are of an inspirational or social type, or related to identity. I am always reminding myself of the need these days to move towards the notion of ‘well-made’ and ‘healthy’ food. In my opinion this means talking about products that are good in a broad sense, both inside and out. It means attaching value to the rediscovery of lost flavors through short production chains which are both worker- and environment-friendly. All-round sustainability must become the cornerstone of our strategic choices.”

Marianna Palella
CEO AND FOUNDER OF CITRUS
Creativity and intuition enhancing the fruit and vegetable sector

Marianna Palella
CEO AND FOUNDER OF CITRUS

HOW DO YOU IMAGINE THE FOOD OF TOMORROW?
I am always reminding myself of the need these days to move towards the notion of ‘well-made’ and ‘healthy’ food. In my opinion this means talking about products that are good in a broad sense, both inside and out. It means attaching value to the rediscovery of lost flavors through short production chains which are both worker- and environment-friendly. All-round sustainability must become the cornerstone of our strategic choices.

In addition, we need to keep in mind the significant changes taking place on a global scale, considering both the constant rise in the population and the major global events that profoundly shape consumer habits. We are well aware of the fact that the earth is already at the limits of its productive capacities: we therefore need to develop innovative solutions for the food sector. Innovations that seem improbable today, like lab-created food, are destined to take hold rapidly in years to come as real and increasingly widespread alternatives.

Also underway, however, is a trend towards the genuine rediscovery of home-made food: consumers are gradually getting back a taste for food made with their own hands. In the future there will therefore be a growing scope for «meal kit» products: a range of hybrid, functional solutions which elevate consumers to the status of food-makers, enabling them to be actively creative with minimum effort and skills.

WHICH INNOVATIONS IN THE SECTOR DO YOU BELIEVE TO BE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT?
In our sector I believe the scene will be increasingly dominated by «residue-free» farmed products. This type of farming is eco-friendly and high in quality, while still capable of guaranteeing high levels of productivity. Compared to «organic» farming, as we understand the term today, residue-free methods can accommodate higher demands, a fundamental aspect for this rapidly and constantly expanding market.

«The food industry is more dynamic and open to dialogue today than ever before. Consumers are not only seeking to satisfy a primary need; they are looking to enhance their experience through products with added values, whether of an inspirational or social type, or related to identity.»
In fact there is a need to satisfy the needs of a growing number of consumers who are now more knowledgeable and demanding in their food choices. This is reflected in an increasing demand for quality products which, instead of being a niche market, can be offered at prices that everyone can afford. We are moving towards what we might define as a «democratization of the organic»: a new trend of widespread wellbeing which will empower us to feed a wider consumer base in good and even better ways. Innovations in the sector must therefore convincingly meet the demands of this trend. Vertical hydroponic farming, for example, will represent another important tool to tackle climate change, since it is capable of optimizing costs and labor and of maximizing quality and productivity.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TREND FOR COMBINING FOOD AND TECHNOLOGY? WHICH FOOD CATEGORIES WILL GROW MOST SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE FUTURE? This is an inevitable trend and technology is set to offer an increasing range of new and valid resources to improve products and processing systems. Take, for example, precision agriculture or pasta made by 3D printing, both of which demonstrate that close ties between food and technology are not only already underway, but that they are only just beginning to be explored. In addition, technology also means progress in the field of food safety and better guarantees of taste and conservation of nutritional values, made possible by the use of specific processes. There will be a rise in vegetable consumption, particularly in the development of alternative «veggie» proposals, and a growth in the area of cereals and derived products as a substitute for meat proteins, for the ever-growing population of vegetarians.

«Innovations in the sector must therefore convincingly meet the demands of this trend. Vertical hydroponic farming, for example, will represent another important tool to tackle climate change, since it is capable of optimizing costs and labor and of maximizing quality and productivity.»
WHAT DO YOU IMAGINE FOR TOMORROW’S FOOD SECTOR?
I see a sector destined to evolve profoundly: it is true that not everyone loves to cook, but it is also true that everyone loves to eat well. Despite this, we have less and less free time to dedicate to cooking and in our hectic daily lives we often spend it doing other activities. Tomorrow’s food sector will therefore have to satisfy the growing need for a balance between a demand for quality and taste on the one hand, and the search for convenience and affordability on the other.
For this specific reason, in the future I see the new delivery sector expanding and exploring all of its currently untapped potential. The signs of an evolution are already palpable: the most frequently ordered foods have expanded from those that are particularly difficult to make at home, to encompass easier dishes, like salads or pasta, which are gradually conquering a growing share of the market.

«Cooking at home will become a pleasure, whenever there is the time and the desire to do it. Delivery will increasingly become a daily occurrence, at an ever more competitive price compared to home-made meals.»

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TREND FOR COMBINING FOOD AND TECHNOLOGY?
It’s an ever-growing phenomenon, but I think we are going to have to wait a few more years to see an all-out revolution. It is certainly inevitable, however. There are already more than 400 brands in Italy belonging to restaurateurs who, instead of having a physical store, offer their services exclusively online. Besides having an impact on channels and the way these are used, technology will be applied more
and more to food production: while the concept of the «food pill» is likely to stay in the realms of science fiction for now, a growing number of increasingly futuristic sectors and trends are gradually taking hold.

THINKING SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE DELIVERY SECTOR, HOW HAS IT BEEN IMPACTED BY THE PANDEMIC, AND WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD? The market is still very much in its infancy, which means that every competitor becomes vital in informing consumers about its services. Once the category takes hold, it will be those companies offering the best services that succeed. As for innovation, one steeply rising trend is for customization, that is, the personalization and specialization of both the final product and the producers themselves.

In fact, restaurants offering delivery services will devote more and more time to making specific dishes to accommodate individual dietary needs and demands. Brand names will also become increasingly important: the presence of a particular brand name on a product will be an indication of added value, capable of influencing consumer purchase decisions.

The real revolution in the delivery sector, which will lead to its ultimate success, will come about when high quality service is provided at an ever more competitive price. Delivery will gradually take hold as a more practical, faster and cheaper daily alternative to home cooking.

The current situation and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic have certainly fueled a process that was already underway. The user base has widened enormously and the service has been embraced by previously reluctant businesses, such as starred restaurants. The pandemic has been a tough test for the entire food industry, and in this period of deep crisis delivery has proved to be a precious resource as much for the final user as for the producer.

WHAT KINDS OF BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES DO YOU THINK ARE LIKELY TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE FOOD INDUSTRY? Above all, I would say the trend for creativity in the kitchen. Eating, and sometimes cooking, at home, has been turned into an experience of taste, a pleasure, something to be savored and to carve out special spaces and moments for. Mealtimes are no longer just a basic necessity – they have become a time for creation, inspiration and conviviality. The search for the novel, for meals created from unusual and original ingredients, is a phenomenon that is destined to shape the future of the food supply. This supply will become wider and more varied, especially on delivery platforms. The «veggie» and «plant-based» sector is now well-established in everyday life and will continue to grow.

The trends towards the personalization of foods, on the other hand, are more innovative: DNA-customized foods, still viewed with curiosity, will signal the real revolution in the way we understand and experience our relationship with food. Lastly, but no less importantly, is the theme of sustainability to which consumers are more and more sensitive. Because of consumer attention to the environmental impact of their food choices, procedures and production processes are having to be adjusted accordingly, and rightly so. This affects the delivery sector too, and at Deliveroo we believe that every little initiative is important in the global commitment to safeguarding our planet. We have eliminated plastic cutlery from our deliveries, for example, thereby raising awareness among our partners about the use of sustainable packaging. Small gestures can have profound wide-scale impacts.
In times of the pandemic, boosting immunity has become the greatest preoccupation for consumers, above all because mental and physical health is essential for survival. Probiotics, prebiotics, postbiotics and fiber are the key nutrients of the future.

Our relationship with food during the pandemic has become richer and more intimate, because comfort food helps to alleviate anxiety and provides a sense of evasion from reality.

On the other hand, we have realized that foods rich in nutrients are the ticket to a long and healthy life and potentially for immunity to disease. So food companies must seek to cater to the broad objective of offering us a diet that promotes longevity, while still allowing us to experience the joy of eating.
Crunchy Critters offers a collection of snack bars made from dried insects. The insects are farmed specifically for human consumption in line with current EU regulation and are prepared and packed at a BRC Food accredited facility in the UK. The edible insects are paired with plant ingredients to create a range of healthy protein- and fiber-rich snacks.

RXBARs are protein bars made from genuine ingredients without the B.S., or «Bad Stuff», like added sugars. RXBARs make the perfect pre- or post-workout snack, or a tasty on-the-go breakfast. Every bar contains three egg whites, two dates and other simple ingredients.

ENERGY FOR LIFE
Today's consumers are seeking products that can provide them with the energy boost they need without resorting to potentially harmful substances. Some recipes, like those proposed by RXBAR, contain clearly-stated, tasty, protein-rich ingredients which deliver the extra energy required to cope effectively with daily life. Other brands have opted to harvest the qualities of a secret ingredient: insect flour. Although consumers still have a negative perception of insect-based products, those who try them tend to change their minds: they are tasty, sustainable and rich in proteins and fiber.

02/
THE NEW PROTEINS
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MINDFUL EATING

We are what we eat, and that goes for the body and the mind. For this reason many brands are creating products that enhance both our physical and mental wellbeing. One of these is Moon Bites, designed to help women rebalance hormones and feel happier and more relaxed during their menstrual cycle. The concept of mindfulness, already familiar to us from meditation and yoga, transforms the relationship we have with food. From being an indulgence with short-term rewards, it becomes a lasting experience of wellbeing that allows us to live more fully.

Moon Bites from Food Period are made from natural whole ingredients like raw seeds, capable of having a positive influence on our moods. Moon Bites are based on a functional nutrition protocol called seed syncing, or the seed cycle, that involves eating certain combinations of seeds, in specific quantities, at different stages of the menstrual cycle.

MIND-BOOSTING SNACKS

Nooro is the first snack bar based on CBD to come out of the UK, focusing on the optimization of mental and cognitive functions. Nooro aims to be more than just a simple slow-energy-release oat snack. The bars combine 100% natural ingredients with 25mg of relaxing cannabis and mind-boosting nootropes, for moments of deep focus.

GOOD FOR YOUR GUT

Bio & Me is a brand of probiotic muesli designed to promote good gut health. Looking after your gut is one of the most effective ways of improving your health and general wellbeing.
NOURISHING BODY AND MIND
Taking care of the body and the mind is equally important, and that is why a number of companies have sought to satisfy both these needs. One of these is Lüme, a brand that offers two types of granola snacks, one to help uplift the spirits and interior wellbeing, the other to reach personal objectives by upping the body’s metabolism.

Babasucco is the art of taking care of the body and mind through diet. It is a brand that aspires to HEALTHY LIVING with a wide range of wellbeing solutions: products created to promote good health and wellness.

Goovi has launched a line of 100% natural integrators dedicated to women, which help balance both mental and physical energy every day.

Lüme and Uplift Food are the first brands of functional foods in the world to tap into the beneficial effects of prebiotics on mood and body alike.
«Until a couple of decades ago, consumers were mainly looking for taste and a high nutritional intake in food, and the health factor was, if not neglected, not particularly relevant to the buyer’s choice. Today, however, we are witnessing a turnaround and the rising of a new approach, more aware and attentive to consumer choices. In fact, we live in a historical period where we generally have enough food for everyone and consumers, faced with a wide offer, are becoming more demanding, now looking for healthier solutions. In the future, food and drinks will have to meet a specific set of health requirements and specialized foods will make their entrance in the industry. Diversification and segmentation will be the new keywords.»

Xinmin Liang
FORMER HEAD OF MARKET RESEARCH DEPARTMENT WANGLAOJI
Dairy products: an increasingly plant-based and functional category

Yili Health Drinks Division
XINMIN LIANG – FORMER HEAD OF MARKET RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

HOW DO YOU IMAGINE TOMORROW’S FOOD SECTOR?
Until a couple of decades ago, consumers were mainly looking for taste and a high nutritional intake in food, and the health factor was, if not neglected, not particularly relevant to the buyer’s choice. Today, however, we are witnessing a turnaround and the rising of a new approach, more aware and attentive to consumer choices. In fact, we live in a historical period where we generally have enough food for everyone and consumers, faced with a wide offer, are becoming more demanding, now looking for healthier solutions. In the future, food and drinks will have to meet a specific set of health requirements and specialized foods will make their entrance in the industry.

Diversification and segmentation will be the new keywords. The dairy sector will continue to offer vast opportunities for growth, both in terms of traditional dairy products and more functional and plant-based types. The panel of products will expand: the range of products will broaden to include not only milk for lactose intolerant consumers, but also for those who suffer from diabetes, hypertension and other diseases.

We will see a growing demand for specialization, which will encourage new food solutions, in line with individual needs and almost «tailor-made».

A market will therefore emerge more and more divided into sub-categories and into micro sectors, each with its own, peculiar characteristics.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INNOVATIONS IN THE SECTOR?
Speaking of innovation, the key factor for it to be effective and lasting is knowing how to grasp the insight of consumers. You cannot innovate without taking into account your target and its needs. Of course, new technologies are essential, but it all starts with the people. In the years to come we will have products created ad hoc
and the research and development phases will acquire a new, immense value. Product innovation in the food sector will necessarily pass through digitalization and new technologies will allow the acquisition of large amounts of data and information. Furthermore, the full potential of AI and VR technologies still remains to be explored. Product testing, data collection and information: everything will become more intuitive and immediate.

WHICH FOOD CATEGORIES WILL EXPERIENCE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN THE FUTURE?
I think that in addition to a growth of the dairy product category, it is interesting to focus on the rising demand we will see for mineral water. It is a limited product which in the future will become increasingly scarce. This scarcity will however have to contend with a corresponding growing demand for mineral water, which also indicates a general rise in the average level of wellbeing. Consumers are indeed seeking higher quality products. This trend will also affect how we perceive «water», no longer just a «necessary» product functional to quenching thirst, but a selected and high-quality drink. The entire beverage market, in general, will experience growth. This also includes coffee, a product with enormous potential in the Chinese market, and the ever-thriving category of teas. Teas in particular will help strengthen the offer of «healthy drinks» because they are already associated with beneficial properties. It will no longer be a matter of simply providing a thirst-quenching product; even in this category, added value and specific features will become the successful differentiators.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE BALANCE BETWEEN LOCALISM AND GLOBALISM? HOW IS GLOBAL CULTURE CHANGING CONSUMER INSIGHTS IN THIS CATEGORY?
Localization and globalization are two sides of the same coin: one needs the other and it is a process of gradual integration. Different cultures influence each other, hence creating mutual added value. In terms of communication and advertising, consumers are already proving to be more rational in choosing between local and foreign products, and the combination of «foreign product-best quality» is no longer valid. Local production is being rediscovered and enhanced.

CONSUMERS ARE BECOMING MORE SOPHISTICATED: WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS MEANS FOR BRANDS?
Consumers are increasingly looking for products (food and drinks) with low sugar content, if not totally sugar-free. Behind this request lies the need for a healthier lifestyle. However, a «healthy» diet does not equal a privative food choice or giving up taste. Nobody wants to give up the yummy side of food! In fact, the food of the future will not only be healthy, it will also have to provide taste. The outcome will be good products, which we’ll enjoy knowing that at the same time they are good for us and our health.

Examples of brands that lose value because they fail to live up to their commitments are now widespread. In addition, the need to communicate effectively and engagingly is now essential: communication styles and techniques will become more diversified and interactive.

«Nobody wants to give up the yummy side of food! In fact, the food of the future will not only be healthy, it will also have to provide taste. The outcome will be good products, which we’ll enjoy knowing that at the same time they are good for us and our health.»
Tea drinks in modern China: new technologies rewrite the beverage industry

Wanglao ji
JIZENG YE – DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER

IF YOU THINK ABOUT TOMORROW’S FOOD, HOW DO YOU IMAGINE IT?
I think that the future of the sector will go through a series of major phenomena: first of all, we will witness the fast consolidation of the consumption of pan-functional beverages: from supplementary ones, to relaxing ones, to even more targeted beverage products, perhaps to assist in the treatment of certain pathologies or as support for skincare treatments.
The second phenomenon is closely linked to a strong incentive in the field of research and development with the aim of combining ingredients and new technologies in a functional way, hence creating a new generation of health products. Finally, this will impact on production, which will permit the development of customizable products based on the needs of consumers, even on their specific health conditions

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INNOVATIONS IN THE SECTOR?
I believe there are 3 fundamental aspects to take into consideration when it comes to innovation in the food sector. First of all, product innovation, and specifically single product innovation, which leverages the characteristics and peculiarities of the individual product, which is unique and distinctive in its own way.
Secondly, the importance of the brand is growing, so there is a need for brand building in a conscious and effective way.
Finally, the boost given by digitalization will be essential to build new channels and contacts. For instance, think about the potential yet to be discovered of experiential technology.
It is essential to combine raw materials with the new technologies of the sector so as to create new products capable of responding to the new needs that consumers demand.

«The tea and herbals industry has strongly developed in recent years. There was a fast growth in the pre-2015 period and many famous brands were established; from 2016 onwards, the rise has been less rapid. Beverages are divided into two main categories: «mass» products and «customized» products. In recent years, the development of the latter category has experienced an unprecedented boom.»
The food-technology combination, with particular focus and attention to its implications and impacts on health, will be the cornerstone of the coming years.

**WHICH FOOD CATEGORIES DO YOU THINK WILL GROW MORE SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE FUTURE?**
Let’s start from the consumers’ perspective: pan-functional products will be increasingly in trend, becoming more and more specialized and focused on the specific needs of the individual. Focusing on raw materials, we will see a rising importance given to everything that is plant-based and created with vegetable proteins. Lastly, food technology will ensure a huge development of the NFC (Not From Concentrate) categories and high-pressure fruit juices.

**WHICH BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES DO YOU THINK WILL IMPACT THE FRUIT INDUSTRY? AND WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TREND OF COMBINING FRUIT WITH TECHNOLOGY?**
In the future, the entire industry will pay more attention to sustainable development. We will talk not only about the sustainability of the final product, but also about the entire production process upstream of its creation. Packaging, carbon emissions, consumption, they are all issues that we are already trying to tackle today with a more «green» approach. Precisely for this reason it will be necessary to encourage the use of organic raw materials, and to guide the research and development departments towards the use of more eco-friendly guidelines.

Organic agriculture will be the turning point of the sector so as to remain sustainable in the coming decades. The other great pillar, the healthy side of the product, cannot be separated from the «taste» factor and the quality of the ingredients.

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Globalization has created a new «local» where different cuisines are intertwined, shaping new culinary traditions. Buying from the nearby shop, whether it is Italian, Argentinian or Vietnamese, creates a sense of social bonding that cannot be replicated by the large chains and retail companies. Attention to small communities represents an opportunity for hyper-local companies to get a firmer foothold in people’s lives.

During the lockdown period we saw a mushrooming of campaigns to sensitize us to «local» shopping to support the small businesses hit hard by the restrictions. But is the concept of local the same as it was 30 years ago?
BEYOND THE LOCAL
While on the one hand consumers are more and more curious about ethnic flavors, on the other they are turning back to older local traditions, on a journey to rediscover regional ingredients and the tastiest, healthiest and most genuine products made from them. Eataly has been an advocate of local Italian culture for years, both in Italy and abroad, enriching Italian-made products with premium health-oriented values.

01/ TRUE ITALIAN

Eataly is about eating Italian food, living the Italian way. Our goal is to demonstrate that high quality Italian food and wine is within everyone’s reach. Eataly aims to put a face to the people behind those high quality products that distinguish Italian food and wine, to share their stories and methods of production.

Martelli pasta pays tribute to its birthplace, Lari (PI), with a strong sense of heritage and a family touch. All the processes at the pasta factory follow slow procedures at low temperatures: an approach abandoned by industry because of long waiting times and lower yields but which is necessary to enhance the flavor of the wheat, maximize sauce absorption, and increase the digestibility of the pasta.
A FUSION OF FLAVOURS

Gen Z, the generation of young people born between 1995 and 2010, is taking ethnic and cultural diversity into the mainstream. A large share of the global population was born to immigrant parents, which means that their experience – and understanding – of taste is intrinsically varied. As Gen Z enjoys a rise in spending power and a growing influence, it will fuel the «migration of taste» trend, securing the widespread acceptance of unusual and regional tastes. As the most likely setting for experimentation, big cities set the stage for these experiences: restaurant concepts in search of new ingredients, tastes and rituals; and supermarkets fully engaged with local communities, offering a wealth of international products that span the globe from Asia to South America.

MOOD MARKET – the new ethnic food store in the heart of Milan’s Chinatown – offers a whole range of Asian products. Compared to other markets in the neighborhood and in Milan in general, Mood Market stands out for its neater, well-manicured ambience, reminiscent of «luxury» overseas delis.

Star revisits new Italian eating trends with Sakebon, the ready-to-heat noodle cup that surprises and titillates the palate. Easy to prepare and mess-free, it is the perfect tasty meal, whether at home or on the move.

Warsà, the new African restaurant, brings Eritrean cuisine to Milan, with a dining experience that offers much more than just taste. In fact, the eatery’s ethnic color and atmosphere take customers on an exotic journey, even in these travel-restricted times.
Consumers can personalize their use of pasta, adapting it to a whole variety of dishes. It is used in diverse cultures in various forms and ways, and according to many different concepts. Take the Asian world: their typical pasta – noodles – is now known worldwide. The culture of Asian food will have a deep impact: not only is it deeply rooted in ancient tradition, but also in the notion of food as a medicinal aid. This is what really distinguishes it from other cuisines: food is treated as nourishment and a source of wellbeing, like a natural form of medicine with values enriched by the quality of ingredients and its historical and cultural background, expressed in typical recipes. This is why ethnic food will become increasingly widespread and less of a niche market."

Andrea Malservisi
COMMUNICATION & EQUITY DIRECTOR, BARILLA
The future of food consumption is in technology, but we will never completely give up the pleasure of eating.

Andrea Malservisi
COMMUNICATION & EQUITY DIRECTOR, BARILLA

WHICH FOOD CATEGORIES WILL GROW MOST SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE FUTURE, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TREND FOR COMBINING FOOD AND TECHNOLOGY?
Technological innovation is now an integral part of growth in the sector. The functional implications of food will become more and more important: products will not only have to be «good», they will also have to be «good for you» and easy to use, both in terms of practicality and convenience. Products like yogurt, soups and stocks, still perceived as foods, suggest a new possible emerging phenomenon: by this I mean «liquid foods»: a smart consumer concept of eating which is fast and practical without compromising the quest for taste. The meat alternatives sector will also continue to expand. We need to realize, in fact, that the Mediterranean diet is now a bit outmoded – destined to be replaced by the plant-based diet, which is experiencing a boom, especially in the USA.

Looking to the future, with a target that is increasingly aware, multifaceted and demanding, we will also inevitably see an ever growing personalization of food, culminating in DNA-based products, tailor-made for the end consumer. Nevertheless I do not believe that we will ever give up the pleasure of eating: in fact I don’t think we will every really talk about food «in a pill».
Above all, on a local level food will undoubtedly remain deeply rooted in culture.

WHICH BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE FOOD INDUSTRY?
Brands will no longer be able to avoid being «active»: they will have to be committed first hand to supporting causes and movements related to their values.
The real question, then, is what is the future of eating? Eating understood not only as a dietary necessity, but as a veritable experience.

«Brands will no longer be able to avoid being «active»: they will have to be committed first hand to supporting causes and movements related to their values. The real question, then, is what is the future of eating? Eating understood not only as a dietary necessity, but as a veritable experience.»
changing: chefs themselves are aware that they need to reinvent themselves and to do so in the short term, within the next 5 years. It is not only a question of nutrition then, but of all-out entertainment: consumers will have to be involved and become an active part of the process. Sustainability itself needs to be analyzed in terms of the target: the consumer of junk food is still relatively uninterested in the subject.

FOCUSING ON THE PASTA SECTOR, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE HOLDS? WHAT ARE THE MAIN TRENDS TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION? On a worldwide level, especially in countries like the USA and the UK, diet is strongly influenced by trends, therefore becoming a continuously evolving variable. Pasta in particular is a very easy product to use and therefore extremely versatile and multifaceted.

Consumers can personalize their use of pasta, adapting it to a whole variety of dishes. It is used in diverse cultures in various forms and ways, and according to many different concepts. Take the Asian world: their typical pasta – noodles – is now known worldwide. The culture of Asian food will have a deep impact: not only is it deeply rooted in ancient tradition, but also in the notion of food as a medicinal aid. This is what really distinguishes it from other cuisines: food is treated as nourishment and a source of wellbeing, like a natural form of medicine with values enriched by the quality of ingredients and its historical and cultural background, expressed in typical recipes. This is why ethnic food will become increasingly widespread and commonplace, and less of a niche market, and why, with its panel of products and different ways of eating, it will define the future of our sector.

WHICH TRENDS AND ATTITUDES WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE FOOD INDUSTRY AND ON THE WORLD OF PASTA IN PARTICULAR? Pasta is a successful ingredient, and Barilla is a worldwide market leader in the sector: pasta connects naturally to the «Veg» trend because it is a plant-based product, enhanced by the culture and the processing story that accompany it: from wheat to pasta, each type with a different shape and design, a different story and a specific use. Although rice is part of the same trend, it does not have the same processing story and is therefore unlikely to have the same kind of impact.

As for the new technologies and specific innovations in the sector, I am very curious about experimentation with 3D printing because of the opportunities it offers to create new shapes and mixes that can be personalized more and more. In fact the real challenge that we have been working on for years is that of succeeding in giving greater texture to pasta, so as to make it a product in its own right, independent from pasta sauces. We want to make it a product capable of providing a multi-sensorial experience, to be used not only in the traditional manner, but also in innovative ways, as a snack, for example. This is clearly not an easy journey and product innovation in this area is undoubtedly slower than it is for more versatile products. The world of sauces is instead expanding rapidly, with the search for fresher, more natural flavors and combinations, and for a taste that closely resembles homemade versions. It is a business that is currently worth four times that of pasta.

«Pasta is a successful ingredient, and Barilla is a worldwide market leader in the sector: pasta connects naturally to the «Veg» trend because it is a plant–based product, enhanced by the culture and the processing story that accompany it: from wheat to pasta, each type with a different shape and design, a different story and a specific use. Although rice is part of the same trend, it does not have the same processing story and is therefore unlikely to have the same kind of impact.»
Ten years’ experience at the service of the agri-food sector.

Carlo Mangini
MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR AT CONSORZIO PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

HOW DO YOU IMAGINE THE FOOD OF TOMORROW?
WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INNOVATIONS IN THE SECTOR?
The food of the future will not differ essentially from the food we eat today. It will continue to find expression among the various cultures and traditions of which it represents an essential part. The greatest changes are most likely to take place in the way that food is consumed. As for innovation, first of all we need to define what we mean by the term: for me it is nothing more than an adequate response to consumer needs and expectations. For the food sector in particular, I believe we need to talk about progress, focusing on the entire production chain and not just the final product. Innovation therefore means improved traceability, safety and supervision, and a production process capable of integrating all its components as part of a single organism. It also means talking about marketing and distribution channels. From this point of view, I am increasingly interested in the way e-commerce and the big data sector will manage to define the relationship with the consumer, developing a more targeted rapport that enables the discovery of interesting new insights.

WHICH FOOD CATEGORIES DO YOU THINK WILL GROW MOST SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE FUTURE?
The trends we have seen in the past few years, like «free from» and «no-added» ranges, will become more and more relevant for consumers. Functional foods, in the strict sense of the term, will become more prevalent in consumer choice and the supply of these products will widen and diversify. However, these products too will be judged by consumers through a careful evaluation of the brands that produce them. In fact, more and more often consumers seek reassurances
that go beyond the more tangible aspects, such as the product itself, evaluating the brand in its complexity and in the light of its values and the initiatives it promotes.

ON THE SUBJECT OF SUSTAINABILITY, WHICH PARTICULAR ASPECT DO YOU THINK WILL BE MOST RELEVANT IN THE FUTURE?
When taking a standpoint on this subject, we need to have a completely rounded view. The three pillars of sustainability all need to be pursued in parallel, from an environmental, social and economic point of view. As a consortium, this is the approach we have adopted and put into practice in tangible steps, starting from the definition of our brand manifesto: it is a public manifestation of intention which embraces the five values we believe are fundamental. We express our commitments on the basis of these values, transforming them into concrete initiatives to improve the production chain, starting from the territory and its community.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE BALANCE BETWEEN LOCALISM AND GLOBALISM? TO WHAT EXTENT IS GLOBAL CULTURE CHANGING CONSUMER INSIGHTS IN THE CATEGORY?
The events caused by the Covid-19 emergency have raised some important questions. Capitalism, which has inspired and driven our progress to the extent that it appeared to be the only and inevitable alternative, has now been shaken to its foundations. Something will change. It is difficult to predict what exactly, but this long pause accompanied by something unknown and dangerous is going to have a considerable impact on consumer behaviors and production criteria. This is already being seen in a renewed interest in the use of local products which are perceived as being closer to home and therefore intrinsically more «reassuring».

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TREND FOR COMBINING FOOD AND TECHNOLOGY?
Technology plays a considerable role in the food sector, both upstream and downstream. The R&D and marketing sectors in particular will benefit enormously in the coming years from current technological innovations. Besides food production, the real difference that technology will be able to guarantee is the growing speed of response to consumer needs and demands.

CONSUMERS ARE BECOMING MORE SOPHISTICATED: WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IMPLIES FOR BRANDS?
We need to understand what we mean by «sophisticated». Consumers are certainly more careful these days, less vulnerable and less inclined to passively accept the traditional forms of marketing. However, in my opinion this is a clear sign of progress, an opportunity for brands to rejuvenate and create more valuable relationships with consumers. This holds even more for those brands that are able to take a standpoint and promote specific initiatives and values.

«We need to understand what we mean by «sophisticated». Consumers are certainly more careful these days, less vulnerable and less inclined to passively accept the traditional forms of marketing.»
05/ The new natural

From fruits of the earth to fruits of the lab

Science and technology are the key words for the new dietary trends. Scientific research and technological innovations will identify ways of farming essential ingredients in areas where water is scarce, by creating plants that are more resilient, even in extreme climates.

Many brands aim to adopt innovative approaches which, by 2030, will make the whole supply chain more sustainable and reliable. Consumers will come to put greater trust in data about their biological system, and will make choices that are increasingly more aware and personalized, with a view to protecting the body, mind and even mood.
The sushi restaurant Singularity, due to open in Tokyo in 2020, will collect guests’ biological data in order to create 3D-printed sushi, tailor-made to their dietary requirements.

Memphis Meats produces healthy meat by harvesting from cells instead of animals. The goal behind this cell-based meat is to «transform how food gets to our plates, while continuing to eat what we love. Same great taste, better for the planet.»

A Finnish company called Solar Foods is developing a protein powder by using air, water and electricity. The Solein Powder, which is set to reach the market in 2021, contains around 65% protein, like soya and seaweeds. It is «an entirely new kind of food that is both natural, and free from the burdens of agriculture and aquaculture.»

Over the next 10 years, consumer choice will be dictated by personal biochemical data. Accessible tests and data collection and analysis will enable people to discover what is best for their bodies. The results will support consumers in all aspects of wellbeing, including mental health and mood. Food and drinks producers, as well as restaurant services, will be able to develop tailored recipes and products, offering dishes capable of satisfying individual health needs without neglecting taste.

Until now food has always been grown on the land, but in the future this might not necessarily be the case. Because of the rapid growth in world population, the earth’s resources required to meet the needs of the entire planet will soon be depleted. So, if food can’t be farmed on the land any more, why not grow it in the laboratory? A number of brands are now producing meat from cells instead of from animals, delivering the same taste and nutritional values while offering a better response to the environmental problems related to meat production.

VitaMojo has partnered with DNAFit to offer ultra-personalized meals based on individual needs, determined by their blood group.

BIODATA, MADE TO MEASURE

LAB BORN AND REARED

VITAMOJO, LONDON, UK

MEMPHIS MEATS, U.S.A.

FOOD OUT OF THIN AIR

SOLAR FOODS, FINLAND

SINGULARITY, TOKYO, JAPAN

02/ LAB BORN AND REARED

01/ BIODATA

05/ The new natural

The new natural
Scientific innovations have led to the creation of healthy, eco-friendly vegan alternatives which offer the same taste and nutritional experiences as their «normal» equivalents. JUST Egg is a perfect example, with its vegan bean-based egg alternative, offering consumers a healthy product that tastes like scrambled eggs. Impossible Food is a company that produces meat from plants. «Impossible Burger is our first product, made from plants for people who love ground beef, with the delicious taste, aroma and nutritional values you know and love. Our goal: to create better food for people and the planet.» Joy Food’s Food Evolution brand is the perfect solution for people wishing to reduce their meat intake or seeking new alternatives: its balanced nutritional content is rich in protein and entirely plant-based. Just Egg is a vegetarian and vegan alternative to eggs, made from curcuma and mung bean protein. It tastes and feels like eggs. And it comes in a bottle.
A capable mix of tradition, high-quality ingredients and innovation for the future of the beverage industry.

Yuki Liu, Haisheng Group
YUKI LIU - GENERAL MANAGER OF FACILITY AGRICULTURE DIVISION & DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER OF FRESH FRUIT MARKETING DIVISION

IF YOU THINK ABOUT TOMORROW'S FOOD, HOW DO YOU IMAGINE IT?

Tradition and innovation will indissolubly coexist: if on the one hand we invest more resources and energy in research and development processes, on the other hand tradition will continue to dominate, especially in those regions and cities where cultural identity is more strongly felt. The integration of «old» and «new» will encourage a progressive and widespread improvement in the efficiency and quality of the production system itself. It will not only foster the creation of new products, but also the development of innovative platforms, distribution channels and models. The outcome will be a renewed sector, in progressive evolution and improvement.

«Consumers today are more «rational». This means that the consumption of a product depends primarily on the product itself, on its qualities and characteristics as well as on the production process used. Advertising and the whole world of communication have only a secondary influence.»

FOCUSING ON THE FRUIT INDUSTRY, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE WILL HOLD? WHICH FOOD CATEGORIES DO YOU THINK WILL GROW MOST SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE FUTURE?

I think the trends of the future are those that consumers are already demanding today, specifically affordability and healthiness. Healthier and more functional products (with less sugar and fat, and lower calorie intake) will increasingly fill the shelves and will be characterized by more and more competitive prices. In addition, the element of functionality will become a distinguishing factor: for example, more efficient forms of packaging will be developed, so as to ensure a greater portability of the product and favoring its use in everyday life. Regarding fresh products, plant-based ones will acquire greater importance.

#foodinsight
WHICH BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES DO YOU THINK WILL IMPACT THE FRUIT INDUSTRY?
From an economic point of view, the increase in costs will necessarily favor the research and development of new types of products, especially plant-based ones. Thanks to the use of new technologies, being more competitive will also mean being innovative, daring and experimental. From a consumer perspective, on the other hand, although the average Chinese consumer is willing to pay more for better quality and is not particularly price-sensitive, we will see a growing search for options that combine quality and affordability.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE BALANCE BETWEEN LOCALISM AND GLOBALISM? HOW IS GLOBAL CULTURE CHANGING CONSUMER INSIGHTS IN THIS CATEGORY?
Globalism has always been part of our DNA: as a company, over the years we have acquired a specific understanding of the needs of foreign consumers. That is primarily thanks to collaborations with large international companies and relationships built with customers from all over the world. Although we are a local reality, we do not want to use «traditional» agricultural methods: our aim is to adopt a modern approach, with a global scope, capable of taking into account the reality of which it is part, in our case the Chinese context and the specific needs of its consumers. Speaking specifically of our domestic market and its relationship with foreign countries, we have noticed a significant reversal of trend: in the past, products were produced in China and then sold abroad; today instead we acquire skills and new technologies from abroad, but we produce and sell in China to meet domestic demand. Globalism therefore remains, but from a new perspective which now favors the local. Localism has been rediscovered as an added value, especially in the last two years. It is important to note, however, that the two elements are not in conflict with each other. Indeed the opposite is true. Globalism and localism are now two inseparable factors, closely tied by a very high level of interaction which involves a considerable degree of mutual influence. Approaching one aspect necessarily means taking into account the other: today we are much more open to foreign cultures, we learn and assimilate new techniques, trends and innovations, which then have an impact on the domestic market.

CONSUMERS ARE BECOMING MORE SOPHISTICATED: WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS MEANS FOR BRANDS?
First of all, it means awareness and consciousness. Consumer choices are more «rational». This means that the consumption of a product depends primarily on the product itself, on its qualities and characteristics as well as on the production process used. Advertising and the whole world of communication have only a secondary influence. Furthermore, we must also consider the new socio-economic factors: we are faced with the average consumer today who tends to belong to a medium-high income bracket. Consumers are therefore not particularly price-sensitive individuals, but they are focused on quality. They are more demanding and meticulous in their purchasing choices. For brands, this means fulfilling new commitments and offering a final product that is not only excellent, but also made through high quality production processes.

«We must also consider the new socio-economic factors: we are faced with the average consumer today who tends to belong to a medium-high income bracket. Consumers are therefore not particularly price-sensitive individuals, but they are focused on quality. They are more demanding and meticulous in their purchasing choices. For brands, this means fulfilling new commitments and offering a final product that is not only excellent, but also made through high quality production processes.»
What is the future of the food industry?

Let's talk about it!

Does my product convey its benefits fairly?

Does my range of products satisfy all my target's needs?

Does my brand cater to upcoming trends?

Does my product convey its benefits fairly?

How can I be both sustainable and offer a service that is smart and safe?

How can I reach consumers in their homes in complete safety?

How important is it to feed the mind?

What are the needs of the new generations?

What are the new traditions for habitats?

Will today's eating habits change in coming years?

Is e-commerce the key?

How will the world change in the next 5/10 years?

Where should I invest?

The Future of Food
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