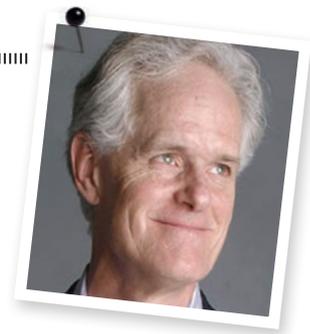


Peter Henderson



Eco-food will be more than a mega-trend — Part 1

Accelerate profitability by innovating transformational eco-products

This is not a holier-than-thou article. It is designed to encourage you and your colleagues to reframe where there is transformational opportunity, while de-risking your business and considering what's right for societies, in Canada and beyond.

In October, expert food and drink analysts at Mintel announced 12 global trends for 2016, including: "Eco is the New Reality. Drought, worries about food waste and other natural phenomena not only affect the worldwide food and drink supply, but influence preparation and production. In 2016, sustainability evolves from being good for the bottom line to being a necessary part of new product development for the common good."

While the degree of development of the trend varies by region, the message is clear. But what does this mean for innovators? Where will this trend be in five or 10 years? The answer may surprise you.

In November 2015, Canadian Climate Forum hosted a dynamic symposium on Food Security in a Changing Climate. Contextually, the Canadian Climate Forum positioned "food security" in a new light. Many attendees were thinking of the near-term food system implications



for the entire planet, not just societies in drought-stricken, colder climates, and/or poorer regions of the world. Scientist after scientist realistically exposed stark realities of the planet's deeply troubling changing climate (starting with the North) and its impact on food security and food sustainability. There is good

“Business as usual is no longer an option.”

reason every Canadian could reconsider the definition of "food security" in terms that relate to their children, grandchildren and future generations.

Without getting into scientific detail, climate change is impacting food and water supply, as well as severe climactic events at an alarming rate (faster than anticipated just a few years ago).

Dr. Tim Benton, "champion" for the U.K.'s Global Food Security program, perhaps summarized the situation best: "Business as usual is no longer an option," he said. "The agri-food industry represents 30 per cent of all carbon emissions globally. The easiest ways to reduce total emissions is to change diets and reduce

waste; a move toward 'sustainable nutrition.' For instance, reducing an average family's meat consumption by half can be the same as taking a combustion engine car off the road."

Dr. Benton also advised that trying to transform communities to "local food" should not be done with a view that it will reduce carbon emissions.

It is most likely that regions and businesses which are ahead of this mega-trend will be the winners. However, the true winners will not view this as a competition. If the timeliness of action is insufficient, everyone in future generations could be a loser.

At the moment, the risk to businesses and societies of not acting fast enough are too high. Consider who you or your company can collaborate with. It can be good for business.

For more information on the Canadian Climate Forum visit climateforum.ca. For Mintel's list of 2016 food and beverage trends visit mintel.com.

Peter Henderson is a director on the board of the Agri-food Management Institute (AMI). He is also founder and managing director of Ideovation, a Toronto-based growth strategy services company. Contact him at [phenerson@ideovation.com](mailto:phenderson@ideovation.com)