

SIAL 2020 Virtual Conference October 2020

SIAL Paris (Salon International de l'Alimentation), the world's largest food innovation exhibition that includes foodservice, retail grocery and food processing business sectors was a virtual experience this year. Even though there is nothing that can replace the personal interaction at this global conference, the virtual conference did not disappoint, with of-the-moment research and insight on the tumultuous world of the food business today. The theme of this year's conference #Ownthe change invited food professionals to claim the change as their own.

The Global Situation in 2020

New research was presented at the conference with updates related to the effect of the global pandemic. The Top Global Trends to consider include:

Consumers Want Things to Be Better -- 73% of consumers have changed their eating behaviors in the last two years, very largely to opt for a healthier diet (70%), as well as to eat more locally and seasonally (53%), to choose safer or more wholesome ingredients (44%), and to respect the environment (37%). In a word, people want things to be better: better products, better for their health.

Diet As A Health Risk -- dietary habits of consumers worldwide: on average, 70% of consumers consider that they have changed their dietary habits in favor of healthier ones, with figures as high as 83% in Spain and 81% in China.

Paying Attention to Ingredients

44% of consumers globally are paying more attention to ingredients. The figure rises to 50% in Russia, 56% in Spain and 61% in Southeast Asia. Depending on the country, up to 20% of consumers go so far as to stop consuming certain controversial ingredients altogether. This figure is particularly low for the United States (7%), the United Kingdom (8%), and China (8%).

Source: SIAL Food 360 Study

Three Major Trend Paradoxes

Me Versus The Planet – Consumers want to take care of themselves, but there is a growing understanding of what is right for the planet and the food system.

Proximity Versus Distance – Consumers are choosing to eat more locally and seasonally, yet increased use of delivery and distance purchasing is sometimes at odds with these choices.

Simplicity Versus Sophistication – Increasing interest transparency, minimal processing and packaging co-exists with interest in exotic flavors and a quest for new experiences

Covid 19: Accelerating Consumer Expectations

Global consumer research conducted by Kantar identified 5 major insights:

GREATER EMPHASIS ON LOCAL

The Covid 19 crisis has highlighted some aberrations in the supply chain and dependence on the basics of life, with particular emphasis on those produced by agriculture. There is also a greater drive to protect household budgets.

NEW TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN SLOW LIFE AND FAST LIFE

The lockdown had an immediate impact on food and diets, and is expected to become the new normal for some. It provided the opportunity to cook more, and to begin or develop vegetable growing as consumers take back control of what they put on their plates.

INCREASED AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

The global population has seen the positive environmental effect of the economic slowdown. The result is a heightened awareness in favor of a more sustainable diet that shows greater respect for the environment, animal welfare and people.

A CLEARER SPLIT IN TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN ECONOMY AND PREMIUM

Tighter household budgets and more assertive choices favor brands offering the best guarantees.

A NEW IN-HOME /OUT-OF-HOME BALANCE

New patterns of remote working and continued global anxiety about the pandemic are having a negative medium-term impact on away from home consumption, balanced by a positive effect on in-home consumption.