



# Bite Size Insights

**The Consumer  
Observatory  
Pocket Guidebook**

Consumer insights at your fingertips.

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This guidebook showcases some of the latest insights and information from the Consumer Observatory and highlights how to get in touch to discuss your specific insight requirements.

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[The full suite of Consumer Observatory reports and insights can be accessed here.](#)

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# What is the Consumer Observatory?

Powered by EIT Food, the Consumer Observatory brings together experts and consumer insight organisations from across the food system to curate and produce consumer insights, trend analysis and research tools.

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By combining research expertise and sector knowledge about the green transition within food systems, the Consumer Observatory aims to maximise the availability of consumer insights on agrifood topics, delivering greater knowledge, strategy and guidance to agrifood stakeholders.

This platform puts consumer knowledge and behaviour at the heart of the conversation on food sector trends, driving forward innovative solutions that will help to achieve EIT Food's three missions:



**A Net Zero Food System**



**Healthier Lives Through Food**



**Reducing Risk for a Fair and Resilient Food System**

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[Find out more about the Consumer Observatory](#)

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# The latest on consumer trust in food

For the past seven years, the TrustTracker® study has measured consumer trust in the food system, providing valuable insights for stakeholders across the food value chain.



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## The latest Consumer Observatory TrustTracker® insights show that:

# 45%

Less than half of Europeans say that they have trust in food, related to the taste, safety, health, authenticity and sustainability of our food system.

# 36%

Only a third of consumers believe that the food they eat is sustainable, while less than half (44%) believe it is healthy.

Manufacturers, authorities, retailers and farmers have not managed to increase the trust consumers have in them over the past years.



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**Want to know more?**

[Download the Trust Report 2023](#)



**Klaus G. Grunert,**  
Professor of  
Marketing at  
Aarhus University  
and Lead of the  
Consumer  
Observatory

“Consumers need to have confidence that the food they eat is both good for them, and good for the planet. If we are to support people to make long-term changes to how they eat, we need the food sector to work with consumers to provide better information, options and access for diets that are healthy, nutritious and sustainable – while being affordable and inclusive for everyone.”

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Read more about the Trust Report in  
[New Food Magazine](#)

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# Consumer understanding of regenerative agriculture



Regenerative agriculture is associated with a lower - or potentially net positive - environmental and social impact. But it takes effort, time and financial investment for farmers to switch to regenerative practices. If there was a clear consumer preference for products produced through regenerative practices, the benefits of transitioning would be clearer for farmers, and the risks smaller.

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## The latest Consumer Observatory insights show that:

Many consumers do not see the need to transform current agriculture practices.

Consumers would like more information about the differences between regenerative agriculture and organic agriculture.

The majority of consumers believe they know what regenerative agriculture is and understand the benefits, but often think of it synonymously with organic agriculture.



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**Want to know more?**

[Download the regenerative agriculture report](#)

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# Regenerative recommendations for the food system

In order to stimulate consumer demand for products made via regenerative agricultural methods, the Consumer Observatory recommends that food system stakeholders:

01

**Explain the differences** between organic and regenerative.

02

**Avoid blaming farmers** for the drawbacks of conventional agriculture.

03

**Use a consumer-centric definition** of regenerative agriculture.

04

**Tell a compelling story** about the advantages of regenerative agriculture over conventional agriculture.

05

**Address consumer concerns** through direct engagement and other resources.



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Read more about the regenerative agriculture report in [AgFunder News](#)

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# Consumer perceptions unwrapped: Ultra-processed foods

This pan-European study of almost 10,000 consumers revealed that consumers across Europe are concerned about the impact of ultra-processed foods on their health. Yet a lack of awareness, understanding and means are preventing people from making informed, healthy choices.

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## The latest Consumer Observatory insights show that:

65%

The majority of European consumers believe that ultra-processed foods are unhealthy and that they will cause health issues later in life.

67%

state that they do not like it when their foods contain ingredients they do not recognise.

40%

do not trust that ultra-processed foods are regulated well enough by authorities.

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## Want to know more?

[Download the ultra-processed foods report](#)

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# Next steps for industry stakeholders

Following the research, the Consumer Observatory made a series of recommendations to food sector authorities, health institutions and scientists, with the aim of fostering consumer trust and supporting consumers to make informed, healthier decisions about the foods they are choosing:



01

Health institutions and scientists need to **define ultra-processed** foods and make more conclusive and substantiated statements about their short- and long-term healthiness.

02

Health institutions need to **consider how to communicate with and educate consumers about what food processing means**, what it can look like, and what effects it can have on health.

03

National food recommendations need to **clarify whether plant-based substitutes are ultra-processed foods** and whether this matters for their overall healthiness.



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Read more about the ultra-processed foods report in [Euronews](#)

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# Trend watch and activation

Trends are signs of the present that point us to the future. The Consumer Observatory identifies consumer-centric trends based on current and future shifts in consumer demands and needs, aligned to the EIT Food missions.

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## Future scenarios of food consumption in Europe

Exploring alternative scenarios helps to expand one's own span of observation further towards the future, and to possible risks and opportunities that may otherwise go unnoticed.

The Consumer Observatory is focussing on 'Futures of food consumption and the agrifood ecosystem in Europe in 2035', specifically with regards to emerging technological opportunities for new products and retail experiences as well as to sustainable and healthy consumer choices.

## Meet the Food Expert Advisory Board

The Consumer Observatory Food Expert Advisory Board is a group of European food system stakeholders who provide insight, advice and guidance to the Consumer Observatory on existing and emerging food trends, challenges and opportunities.



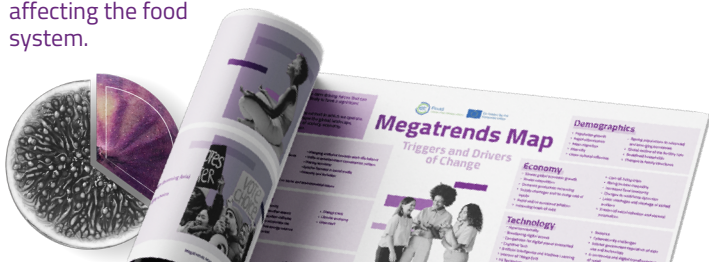
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# Mapping Megatrends

Megatrends are long-term driving forces that shape our world and are likely to have a significant impact on the food system now and in the future. The Consumer Observatory has developed its own map of megatrends affecting the food system.

Understanding and analysing these drivers of change is a useful starting point for food stakeholders to understand the market and consumer context and remain relevant in a changing landscape.

The Consumer Observatory Megatrend Map will guide stakeholders in strategic planning, anticipating and shaping future directions, anticipating innovation and early awareness to identify growth opportunities.



Board members explore long-term drivers, possible future scenarios and consumption trends, and their insights are distilled into practical resources for agrifood stakeholders to use in their decision-making.

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View who is on our [Food Expert Advisory Board](#)

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# The Consumer Observatory Alliance

Supported by EIT Food, the world's largest food innovation community, the Consumer Observatory is made up of a team of food and insight specialists, universities and research platforms, and communications agencies.

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The Consumer Observatory comprises:



Co-funded by the European Union



Greenhouse



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



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To find out how the Consumer Observatory can support your organisation, please reach out to: [co@eitfood.eu](mailto:co@eitfood.eu)

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# What's coming up?

The Consumer Observatory regularly consults the EIT Food community, Food Expert Advisory Board and other industry experts to ensure the curation of relevant, timely and valuable insights.

Upcoming reports and outputs include:

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## TrustTracker® 2024

The upgraded version of the TrustTracker includes additional modules on trusted information, acceptance of innovations and barriers to changing diets.

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## Cultivated meat study

An in-depth study on consumer acceptance of this growing protein diversification solution, including testing of several go-to-market strategies.

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## Understanding the acceptance of food related policies

A framework for policymakers to take citizens' reactions to policies into account when developing effective behaviour interventions.

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## Trend Report 2024

The Consumer Observatory's first trend report, covering the most important consumer trends in food, statistics, relevant innovations and tips on how to apply this knowledge.

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## Megatrends report 2025

An updated version of the Consumer Observatory Megatrends Map, which includes insights from members of the Food Expert Advisory Board.

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## Futures of Food Consumption in Europe in 2035

A report on alternative future scenarios on European food consumption and the overall ecosystem in Europe.

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# Unlock consumer food and drink insights

The Consumer Observatory Alliance offers unrivalled consumer knowledge, stimulating new ideas and innovation among Europe's food and drink players. Take advantage of our expert team's experience in researching innovative products, our deep category and commercial expertise, and passion for understanding the consumer.

Now you can unlock consumer insights through our new research services. We can produce bespoke intelligence and analysis to help ensure your food and drink ideas are optimised for market acceptance. Research services we offer include:

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## Concept Testing

Leverage our accessible, cost-effective consumer panels to test early or late-stage product innovation, market expansion into new geographical markets or brand positioning/repositioning.

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## Co-Funded Studies

Add our research expertise, industry knowledge and capabilities to your own in-house capacity. Together we can run groundbreaking research to answer questions about key food industry challenges and trends.

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[Find out more and get in touch.](#)



# Found these insights useful?

Share your thoughts on social media by tagging EIT Food and using the hashtag **#ConsumerObservatory**



FoodHIVE<sup>o</sup>

**EIT Food is the world's largest innovation community, supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union.**

This guidebook was developed in September 2024.

