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Feeding the world today and tomorrow: The importance of food science and technology

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The Institute of Food Technologists scientific review describes the scientific and technological achievements that made possible the modern production-to-consumption food system capable of feeding nearly 7 billion people, and it also discusses the promising potential of ongoing technological advancements to enhance the food supply even further and to increase the health and wellness of the growing global population. This review begins with a historical perspective that summarizes the parallel developments of agriculture and food technology, from the beginnings of modern society to the present. A section on food manufacturing explains why food is processed and details various food processing methods that ensure food safety and preserve the quality of products. A section about potential solutions to future challenges briefly discusses ways in which scientists, the food industry, and policy makers are striving to improve the food supply for a healthier population and feed the future. Applications of science and technology within the food system have allowed production of foods in adequate quantities to meet the needs of society, as it has evolved. Today, our production-to consumption food system is complex, and our food is largely safe, tasty, nutritious, abundant, diverse, convenient, and less costly and more readily accessible than ever before. Scientific and technological advancements must be accelerated and applied in developed and developing nations alike, if we are to feed a growing world population.

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