



## Setting the table for a smarter planet.

How do we put food on our tables? Once, people simply relied on their local farmers. Today, we depend on a global web of growers, fisheries, packers, shippers, manufacturers, retailers as well as government and industry bodies.

As the world becomes smaller and “flatter,” countries that at one time seemed distant are now primary sources of our food supply. Many of those countries do not have consistent standards for quality, process and accountability. Additionally, this complex system impacts and is impacted by other global systems – from energy to climate to healthcare to trade.

The result is a whole host of inefficiencies arising from issues of scarcity, safety, sustainability and cost. And an opportunity for our food system to get a lot smarter.

We need to make sure our food system is safe. In the U.S. alone, 76 million cases of food-borne illnesses occur each year. Imports account for nearly 60% of the fruits and vegetables we consume, and 75% of the seafood. Yet only 1% of those foods are inspected before they cross our shores.

We need it to be affordable. Consumer product firms and retailers lose \$40 billion annually, or 3.5% of their sales, due to supply chain inefficiencies. And the true cost of food production can't always be captured in dollars. Sixty years ago, we could create a calorie of food with less than half a calorie of fossil fuel. Today, a single calorie of modern supermarket food requires 10 calories of fossil fuel to produce.

And we need to make it more sustainable and efficient. Rising fuel costs are making it increasingly difficult to get enough food to the populations that have come to depend on distant producers. At the same time, 30% of the food purchased in developed nations ends up going to waste.

Trying to manage these problems in isolation is no longer an option. Fortunately, a smarter global food system – one that is more connected, instrumented and intelligent – is at hand. For example, IBM is helping Norway's largest food supplier use RFID technology to trace meat and poultry from the farm through the supply chain to the store shelf.

We're also collaborating with some of the world's leading retailers and manufacturers to create software solutions that can more efficiently integrate product demand with supply replacements, and help dramatically cut time, cost, waste and out-of-stock conditions. And in response to the global hunger crisis, IBM scientists are helping to develop stronger strains of rice that could produce crops with much larger, more nutritious yields.

A smarter food system means end-to-end visibility across the entire global supply chain. So scarce resources can be more thoughtfully managed. So people can have more confidence in the quality of their food. So the whole world can put healthy meals on the table. Let's build a smarter planet. Join us and see what others are thinking at [ibm.com/think](http://ibm.com/think)

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