January 2025 Review: Trends in Food Systems & Innovation

NEWS

Lessons from Food Fraud Incidents

By Campden BRI

A recent blog highlights three high-profile food fraud incidents, emphasizing the importance of learning from past cases to prevent recurrence and urging food and drink operators to remain vigilant against fraud despite robust control measures.

Europol Seizes Illegally-Fished Contaminated Molluscs

By Ghislean Marechal

Europol-supported operations led to the arrest of 62 individuals across France, Portugal, and Spain and the seizure of 30 tonnes of illegally-fished contaminated molluscs and 6 tonnes of glass eels.

Preventing Food Recalls: A Proactive Approach

By Qassurance

The food industry is urged to prioritize preventing recalls through a proactive food safety culture focused on knowledge sharing and continuous improvement, rather than simply addressing issues after they occur.

Food Allergen Management and Labelling Research Findings

By Campden BRI

Research reveals the need for policy refinement to help food businesses improve allergen management, labelling, and food safety culture to ensure accurate and clear allergen information on imported prepacked foods purchased online.

Greenwashing: A Step in the Right Direction?

By Leen Zevenbergen

Despite its ethical concerns, greenwashing is seen as a potential first step towards change, as companies may feel social pressure to adopt more sustainable practices, even if initially driven by marketing, ultimately leading to real improvements.

Impact of Nutri-Score on Nutritional Quality

By Serge Hercberg

A study with 386 participants reveals that the Nutri-Score label alone has a greater positive impact on the nutritional quality of purchased products than price policies such as taxes and subsidies.

Planet-Score: A Step Towards Responsible Consumption

By Lennan Bate

The Planet-Score label provides consumers with transparent information on the environmental, biodiversity, and health impacts of food products, promoting more informed and responsible purchasing decisions.

👥 [Insight on Ecolabels in Europe]
By Koen Boone
WUR's report emphasizes the need for a unified, transparent approach to ecolabels in Europe, suggesting that better data integration and alignment with European standards are crucial for promoting sustainable food production.

👥 [Nutri-Score's Potential for Health Improvement]
By Genna Freeman-Dennis
The article discusses the Nutri-Score's potential to drive food reformulation and improve public health, emphasizing the importance consumer empowerment, and collaboration with food manufacturers to achieve nutritional targets.

👥 [Nutri-Score Update in Open Food Facts]
By Open Food Facts
Open Food Facts has integrated the revised Nutri-Score formula for over 3 million products, offering more accurate nutritional evaluations, with notable changes in the ratings of products like light sodas, fatty fish, and poultry.

👥 [Illegal Trade of Tokay Geckos Highlights Gaps in Regulation]
By Sam Inglis MSc
The global demand for tokay geckos, driven by their use in Traditional Chinese Medicine, has led to a thriving illegal trade, with fraudulent breeding operations and discrepancies in trade origins.

👥 [Insights into Food Law and Industry Trends for 2025]
By Cesare Varallo
The first 2025 issue of the Foodlawlatest.com newsletter features reflections on clarity of thinking, top 2024 articles, and highlights from the upcoming BRCGS Connect 2025 conference in Milan.

👥 [Advancing Food Allergen Management with Quantitative Risk Assessment]
By ILSI Europe
The Food Allergy Task Force has released a practical guide on using Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA) to enhance food allergen labelling accuracy, improve consumer trust, and support global best practices in food safety.

👥 [Rise in Foodborne Illnesses Highlighted in EFSA Report]
By Diane Cuzzucoli
The EFSA's annual "One Health Zoonoses" report reveals a significant increase in listeriosis cases in Europe since 2007, alongside rising instances of campylobacteriosis and salmonellosis.

👥 [FDA Draft Guidance on Labeling Plant-Based Alternatives Sparks Debate]
By Jack A. Bobo
The FDA's draft guidance for labeling plant-based alternatives to animal products emphasizes clear identification, accurate visuals, and transparency, though it faces criticism from industry groups for being unnecessary and potentially confusing.

👥 [Evaluating Marketing Practices for Children's Nutrition]
By ATNi (Access to Nutrition Initiative)
An ATNi assessment reveals how major food and beverage companies align with WHO guidelines on responsible marketing to children, highlighting the global impact of promoting HFSS products during early childhood.

👥 [Sainsbury's Launches 'Healthy Choice' Logo to Simplify Healthier Eating]
By Louis Bedwell
Sainsbury's introduces a 'Healthy Choice' logo on 1,300 products to help shoppers easily identify healthier options, promoting better food choices and supporting broader health and sustainability goals.

👥 [South Australia Bans Unhealthy Food Ads on Public Transport]
By Jane Martin
South Australia takes a significant step toward improving children's health by removing unhealthy food advertising from public transport, showcasing strong preventive health leadership.

👥 [Yuka Achieves Record Growth with 2 Billion Product Scans in 2024]
By Yuka
Yuka experienced remarkable growth in 2024, with over 17 million new downloads—half from the U.S.—and an unprecedented 2 billion products scanned globally, driven by a small team of just 16 people.

👥 [Food Fraud: A Growing Threat to Consumers and Public Health]
By CNBC
Fraudsters infiltrate the global food market through counterfeits, dilutions, substitution, and mislabeling, compromising consumer safety and economic interests.

👥 [Unmasking Major Food Frauds: A Critical Analysis of Threats to Food Security]
By Dr. Vikas Kumar Singh
The increasing global trade in food products faces significant challenges due to intentional fraud, highlighting the need for collective efforts to restore consumer trust.

👥 [Regulating Food Allergen Guidelines at the European Level]
By Savvas Xystouris
A new position paper supported by European scientists advocates for EU-wide monitoring and labeling of food allergens, emphasizing the need for a central reference laboratory to standardize and improve allergen testing across borders.

👥 [Selecting the Right Method for Food Allergen Testing]
By Campden BRI
Effective food allergen testing requires careful selection of the appropriate method, understanding its limitations, and proper result interpretation to ensure a safe food allergen management system.

👥 [Red Meat and Its Role in Sustainable Food Systems]
By Jeroen Candel
A study highlights how the Nordic red meat industry frames its opposition to dietary

guidelines, challenging the push for reduced meat consumption and raising critical questions about the validity of industry claims on health and environmental benefits.

[Addressing Childhood Obesity and Its Global Impact]

By EIT Food

Childhood obesity, a growing global health issue, is linked to various diseases and exacerbated by challenging food environments, prompting the need for action on improving children's nutrition and health.

[The Cost of Lobbying Against PFAS Regulation in Europe]

By Monika Kosinska

A new investigation reveals that industry-led lobbying and disinformation campaigns against PFAS regulation could cost European countries 100 billion EUR annually for the next 20 years in cleaning up contamination.

[Reducing Health Harms through Policy on Harmful Products]

By WHO Regional Office for Europe

Policies that limit access to harmful products, such as taxing sugary drinks, offer significant health benefits, especially for poorer communities and young people, despite industry pushback.

[Overhauling Food Labelling to Address Consumer Confusion]

By FoodNavigator

New research highlights the need for standardized food labeling to improve clarity and satisfaction among consumers, who are currently confused by existing labels.

[FDA Proposes Front-of-Pack Nutrition Label to Improve Consumer Understanding]

By Linn Steward RDN

The FDA has proposed a new interpretive front-of-pack nutrition label to help consumers better understand levels of sodium, saturated fat, and added sugar by categorizing them as low, medium, or high.

[Cold Chain Best Practices Group]

By Ashley Kinney

The Cold Chain Best Practices Group offers a platform for professionals to share experiences, seek advice, and contribute insights to improve processes in the food safety and cold chain management industry.

[Dairy Supply Chain Emissions Reduction Plans]

By Heather Clancy

Major food and restaurant companies, including Danone, Mars, and Pizza Hut, plan to intensify efforts in 2025 to reduce dairy supply chain emissions through new procurement policies, farm practices, and feed additives.

[Sustainability vs. Decarbonization: Key Differences and Synergies]

By Climate Change / ESG Professionals Group

Sustainability emphasizes long-term ecosystem health, resource management, and social equity, while decarbonization focuses on reducing GHGs, and both require a collaborative, integrated approach for environmental and social impact.

[Carbon Credit Market Overview]

By Anna Lerner Nesbitt

The carbon credit market is largely dominated by two standards, with concerns over integrity, while new emerging standards and technologies are gaining traction in an effort to improve the system's transparency and impact verification.

Blockchain Enhancing Transparency in Food Supply Chain

By Connecting Food

Barilla Group has partnered with Connecting Food to enhance transparency and traceability of the basil used in its Pesto alla Genovese through blockchain technology, involving 50 operations, 19 farms, and 6 basil suppliers.

Sustainability Reporting for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs)

By Antonio Vizcaya Abdo

MSMEs face increasing pressure to adopt environmental and social metrics for sustainability reporting, with initiatives like Project Savannah offering tools to help them meet global requirements and improve their competitiveness.

EU Deforestation Regulation Delay Highlights Need for Early Preparation

By Meridia

The European Parliament's approval of a delay in the EU Deforestation Regulation provides companies more time to prepare, but maintaining compliance requires prioritizing data quality, addressing deforestation risks, and mitigating claims.

The Urgency of Innovation in the Cocoa Industry Compared to Meat Alternatives

By Steve Molino

Rising cocoa prices, driven by climate change and other factors, highlight the urgent need for innovation in the cocoa industry, while the lack of similar price shocks in the meat industry delays the drive for action on alternative proteins.

Overcoming Challenges in Marketing Hybrid Meat

By Elise Bijkerk

Hybrid meat faces difficulties in marketing due to the need for clear positioning, requiring distinct strategies for flexitarians and plant-based rejectors while offering a solution to reduce environmental impact without sacrificing the benefits of meat.

The Escalating Impacts of Global Warming

By IPCC

The 1.1°C global warming increase has led to more frequent and intense extreme weather events, escalating hazards to nature and people worldwide.

Exploring Key Sustainability Developments

By Antonio Vizcaya Abdo

The latest updates highlight the growing importance of climate transition planning, corporate sustainability actions, and regulatory pressures, emphasizing the need for businesses to align with long-term sustainability goals to mitigate risks.

Addressing Climate Change: Urgency for Action

By Hans Stegeman

2024 marks a new record in global temperatures, exceeding 1.5°C, highlighting the urgent need for action to transition to renewable energy, regenerate nature, reduce waste, and build resilient societies amidst growing climate impacts.

Tracking the Right Metrics for Decarbonization Success

By Sustainability Infographics

Decarbonization progress relies on the right metrics, such as Scope 1 and 2 reductions, renewable energy use, and carbon abatement costs, to drive emissions reduction and efficiency.

Synergies and Trade-offs Between Climate Action and the SDGs

By Antonio Vizcaya Abdo

Climate change mitigation efforts can support or conflict with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), requiring careful policymaking to balance benefits and challenges across sectors like energy supply and land use.

The Hidden Costs of Food Loss and Waste

By FAO

Food loss and waste involve not only the squandering of edible food and money but also have far-reaching environmental and social impacts.

Embracing True Regenerative Agriculture

By IFOAM

The organic movement advocates for authentic regenerative practices while cautioning against the misuse of the term, emphasizing that organic agriculture already offers transformative, holistic solutions for sustainable farming and food systems.

Indonesia Sets Global Standard for Seafood Traceability

By Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)

Indonesia becomes the first country to align its national traceability system, Stelina, with the GDST Standard, enhancing transparency, combating illegal fishing, and fostering sustainable seafood systems.

What Are Carbon Markets?

By Madeeha Anwar Husain

Carbon markets provide a platform for emission reductions through trading carbon credits, promoting sustainable practices and innovation, while addressing challenges related to credibility, transparency, and balancing offsetting with direct emission reductions.

Harnessing Controlled Environment Agriculture for Sustainable Growth

By UNDP Singapore Global Centre

Controlled environment agriculture offers solutions to meet food demands sustainably, addressing challenges in food systems and exploring opportunities for its adoption in lower- and middle-income countries.

Ensuring Transparent and Sustainable Cacao Supply Chains

By Open Food Chain

The launch of a commercial trial for cacao traceability in line with the EUDR ensures full transparency and sustainability from farmers in Peru to retailers in the Netherlands, promoting a more sustainable chocolate future.

[AI Regulation Enforcement in the EU]

By BEUC - The European Consumer Organisation

The EU's credibility in AI regulation is at risk, with calls for the Commission to adequately staff its AI Office to ensure enforcement of the AI Act, particularly regarding generative AI.

[Advancing Explainable AI for Greater Transparency]

By Wageningen Food Safety Research

Researchers are developing Explainable AI models that provide insights into their functioning, making AI more reliable and informative by offering transparency in decision-making processes.

[The Evolution and Future of Digital Agriculture]

By Patrick Honcoop

The digital agriculture sector, after initial setbacks and slower adoption, is poised for a new wave of innovation driven by robotics, sustainability, traceability, and AI-powered insights, promising to unlock the potential that was previously elusive.

[Oligopolistic Platformisation in Agriculture]

By Monja Sauvagerd

The paper explores the digital transformation in agriculture, highlighting the collaboration between multinational agribusinesses and Big Tech companies in creating oligopolistic platforms, which optimize farming operations.

[Trends in the Fruit and Vegetable Industry for 2025]

By Consentio

In 2025, the fruit and vegetable industry will witness transformation driven by technological innovation, sustainability concerns, and shifting consumer expectations, with tropical and red fruits remaining dominant.

[Ethical, Legal, and Social Aspects (ELSA) for AI in Agri-food]

By Mireille van Hilten

The development of AI in agri-food requires addressing ethical, legal, and social aspects, with the creation of an 'ELSA Scan' tool to assess challenges and opportunities in sectors like dairy and arable farming.

[Europe's Bold Path in 2025: A Focus on Innovation and Ethics]

By Lisbon Concil

The new European Commission's second term marks a pivotal moment for Europe, with a focus on decisive actions and advancing areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and digital skills to enhance competitiveness.

[Exploring Entropy in Data Science and Machine Learning]

By Salomé A. Sepúlveda F.

A new paper on the applications of entropy in data analysis and machine learning offers insights into this crucial concept in AI and data science.

[Digital Transformation in Spanish Agriculture]

By Plataforma Tierra

A new working paper from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, in

collaboration with CAJAMAR, analyzes the latest data on digital transformation in the Spanish agricultural sector.

[FoodTech Industry Outlook & Insights for 2025]

By Gil Horsky

A Forbes article featuring insights from prominent FoodTech VC investors highlights key industry trends and predictions for 2025, offering valuable perspectives on the future of the sector.

[Digital Tools for Healthier Lifestyles]

By Elena Nixdorf

Research highlighting the potential of digital tools in supporting healthy lifestyles is featured in *De Telegraaf*, emphasizing their role in reducing doctor visits and healthcare costs.

[Revolutionizing Inventory Management for Sustainability]

By TotalCtrl

TotalCtrl is transforming inventory management by offering innovative tools that minimize waste, optimize resources, and empower businesses to thrive while promoting a sustainable future.

[Raising the Standard for Seafood Traceability with Automated Testing]

By Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability

The GDST is enhancing seafood traceability by providing free access to digital traceability standards and automated testing tools, ensuring continuous verification and alignment with the GDST Standard in the seafood supply chain.

[Revolutionizing Agricultural Finance Through Blockchain]

By Blockchain for Good Alliance (BGA)

EthicHub is using blockchain to connect small-scale farmers with financing and markets, aiming to create sustainable and equitable agricultural systems by empowering farmers in regenerative supply chains.

[AI Transforming the Food Industry: Insights and Projections]

By Eva Keretic

AI is reshaping the food industry, with the sector projected to reach $270 billion by 2032, driving smarter supply chains, reducing food waste, and accelerating product development, despite challenges like high costs and data quality.

[EIT Food's Successful Year of Expansion and Investment]

By Benoit Buntinx

EIT Food's Business Creation team made significant strides in 2024 by expanding its accelerator network, supporting food tech start-ups, and securing investments for numerous innovative projects aimed at transforming the food system.

[Concerns Raised Over Carbon Farming Methodologies]

By Paul Behrens

Carbon farming methodologies are criticized for not meeting the standards required under the Paris Agreement, with concerns over their environmental integrity and economic viability in the voluntary carbon market.

[The Future of Food: A Vision for a Sustainable and Diverse Food System]

By Chris Mitchell

The future of the food system is envisioned with a focus on regenerative agriculture, diverse and traceable supply chains, healthier consumption patterns, and more innovation, supported by data, technology, and higher accountability.

[Free Resource on Food Economics]

By Alan Matthews

A textbook on food economics is recommended for its comprehensive and accessible approach to food and agricultural economics, nutrition, and health, with the full text available for free download.

[Investment Trends in Global Food and Agriculture for 2025]

By Roberto Vitón

The global agri-food sector is expected to see significant growth in investment funds, with key areas of focus including farmland in South America, private equity in the U.S. and Europe, and natural capital opportunities in land and water conservation.

[EU Food and Drink Industry: A Key Sector in Europe's Economy]

By FoodDrinkEurope

The EU food and drink industry is Europe's largest manufacturing sector, contributing €250bn in value added, employing 4.7 million people, and exporting €182bn, making the EU the world's top agri-food exporter.

[EU Green Deal Regulations and Upcoming Milestones in 2025]

By Andreas Rasche

Several key EU regulatory initiatives, including the Competitiveness Compass, Clean Industrial Deal, and Omnibus Simplification Package, will shape sustainability and ESG actions for the next five years.

[The Role of Carbon Tax in Combating Climate Change]

By Madeeha Anwar Husain

Carbon tax, as a key tool in tackling climate change, encourages cleaner technologies, supports sustainable development, and fosters innovation, while addressing challenges related to fairness and global cooperation.

[Mainstreaming Food Innovation for Sustainability]

By Manuella Cunha Brito

A paper from the WEF emphasizes the urgent need for multistakeholder collaboration to address food system challenges, such as land degradation and the growing demand for resources, in order to promote sustainability and innovation in the food sector.

[Monitoring Food Systems for Transformation Progress]

By Jessica Fanzo

The Food Systems Countdown to 2030 Initiative's annual report and paper highlight positive trends in food system transformation, urging policymakers to reinforce successful progress and address areas needing focus.

[Annual ESG Legal Outlook for 2025]

By Linklaters ESG

The key global themes for the upcoming year include the impact of elections on net-zero goals, the focus on transition plans and finance, sustainability disclosure and due diligence developments, and the evolution of sustainable finance and ESG.

[The 20th Edition of the Global Risks Report]

By World Economic Forum

The 2025 Global Risks Report, based on insights from over 900 experts worldwide, explores the evolving risks over the past two decades and highlights the urgent need for multilateral solutions moving forward.

[Sustainability as a Revenue Enabler]

By Antonio Vizcaya Abdo

A recent survey shows that 72% of executives now view sustainability as a revenue enabler, with companies increasingly embracing sustainability as a core part of their strategy to drive growth, innovation, and profitability.

[Global Water Stress and Its Rising Threat]

By World Resources Institute

Around 50% of the global population is exposed to extreme water stress at least one month per year, and by 2050, this could rise to 60%, driven by factors such as climate change and insufficient water infrastructure investment.

Co-funded by the European Union

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. Project number 101136754.

Project funded by

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI

UK Research and Innovation

This project has received funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)