

# What's Up at the USDA Office?

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## **New Food Trends Looking at Sustainably Raised Foods**

*by LuAnn Rolling, District Conservationist*

To shed light on how cultural and demographic shifts are impacting demand for food and beverage, Hartman Group analysts recently examined six key trends in consumer culture. The Hartman Group includes anthropologists, social scientists and business analysts. This article was written by Laurie Demeritt and published April 4, 2022 on Smartbrief.com.

According to the report “Fresh, less processed foods” have become the premier signifier of quality today when it comes to consumer views on foods and beverages.

The Hartman Group analysts recently examined six key trends in consumer culture in Ideas in Food 2022. These six trends are:

**Regenerative systems (and agriculture):** Consumer awareness of the sustainability challenges of modern agriculture is spreading, spurring consumers to consider alternatives.

Regenerative systems are about restoring soil, biodiversity and humanizing the processes behind these efforts.

**Gut health nexus:** As the digestive wellness trend deepens, awareness of the microbiome as the root of all wellness and its connection to our mental well-being and immunity is expected to mainstream more broadly.

**Rethink plastic:** With more engaged consumers becoming rather jaded from recent headlines about where our recycled packaging actually ends up, there is some hope with innovative packaging solutions on the horizon.

**Experience retail:** Experience retail as a trend stresses the importance of exceeding consumer expectations in today’s shoppable universe.

Upcycled and equitable: Direct and ethically sourced products are increasingly viewed by consumers as helping to restore local ecosystems, mitigate climate change and support the reduction of food waste.

Future nostalgia: Upgraded childhood food and beverage favorites are increasingly being introduced to provide playful throwbacks to iconic experiences while aligning with modern values around health, sustainability and social issues.

Hartman Group feels that food and beverage companies that can successfully leverage these trends by highlighting resonant brand and product attributes can differentiate themselves from the competition to secure future growth in the days ahead.

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