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ABSTRACT

Based on past scientific and technological advances, and due to other developments over the last century, our global food system has become enormously complex, extremely sophisticated and very successful. Nevertheless, projected increases in human population together with greater urbanization and an improved diet indicate that current food production levels must be raised substantially, and processing methods must be improved significantly over the next few decades. In addition, our food system faces other serious challenges, including global environmental changes, air and water pollution, soil erosion and nutrient depletion, water shortage, energy availability and price, limited food accessibility and malnutrition in some areas, but over-consumption and obesity in others, longer human lifespan and an aging population, food safety concerns, and threats from terrorism. This presentation will briefly review such challenges and attempt to look into the future, when food scientists and technologists will have to work closely with agronomists, horticulturists, molecular biologists, toxicologists, materials scientists, nanotechnologists, bioengineers, biophysicists, and many other experts in informatics, nutrigenomics, medicine and health sciences to improve the global food system and make life better for everyone.