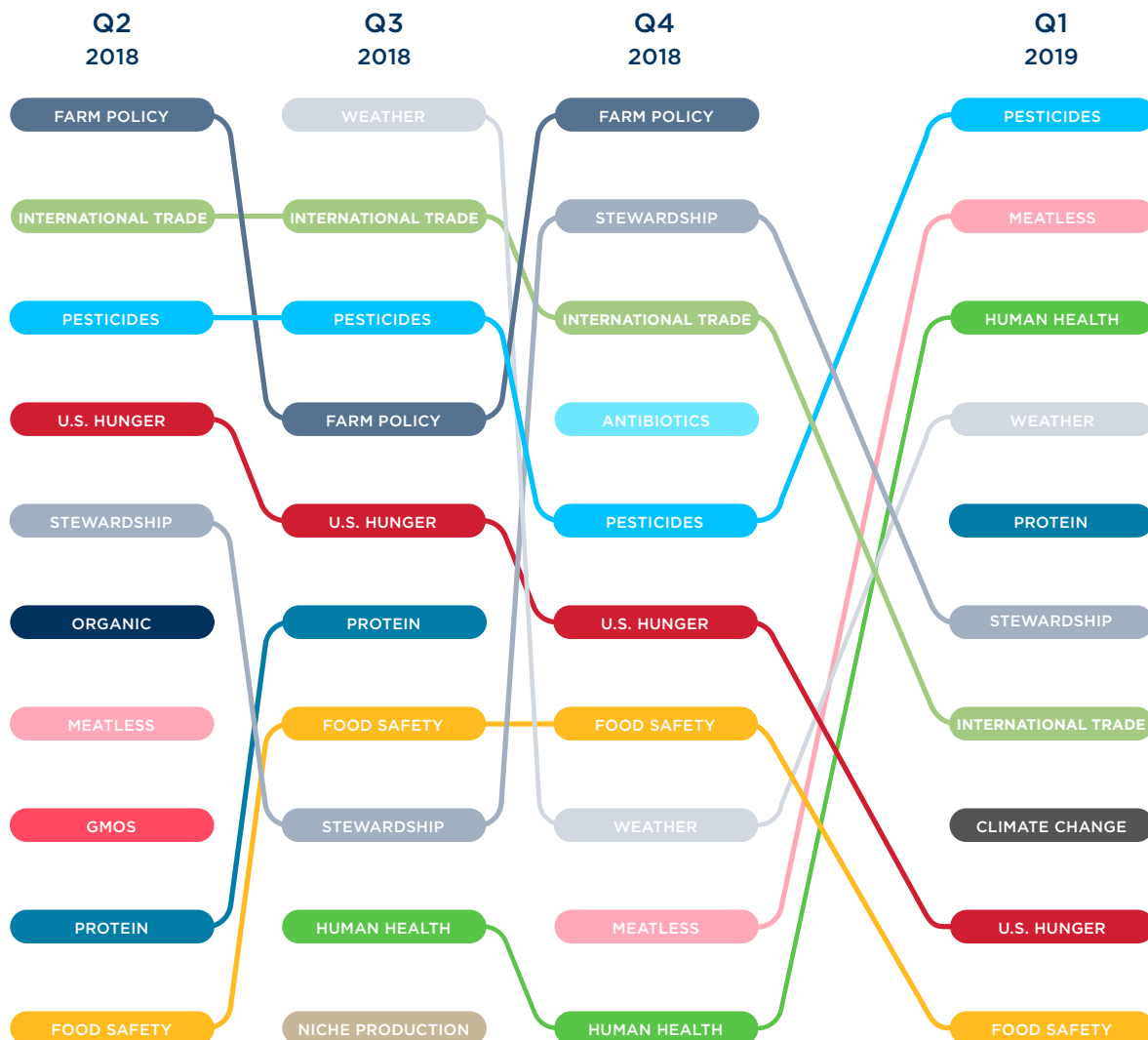


# What's Trending in Food & Bev

Top Ten Topics: Spring 2019



**Pesticides are having a moment, as a new front on the GMO debate.**



Each quarter, The Intel Distillery ranks and analyzes the top ten topics in the food and beverage production world. This signature Intel Distillery infographic, which we affectionately refer to as the Spaghetti Chart, reveals the interactive relationships between various key topics.

After the federal government voted to pass national GMO labeling legislation in Q3 2016, **pesticides** have steadily grown as a topic among influential figures in food production. By Q1 of this year, the topic earned the top spot as lawsuits linking glyphosate with cancer gave some special interest groups the launchpad to release

reports about pesticide residues in food and beverages. This boosted a topic that has steadily gained steam since late 2014.

Other major movements worth noting are how **meatless diets, human health** and **climate change** all reached their highest rankings in five years. This activity traces back to a widely circulated report published in mid-January. British health journal *The Lancet* partnered with sustainability-oriented group EAT to recommend reducing meat intake as a way to support “healthy diets from sustainable food systems.”

## Three other substantial trends in Q1 2019:



**1. Climate change debuts in top ten:** Curtailing climate change serves as a motivating factor for many special interest groups. In the United States, the *EAT-Lancet* Commission's report highlighted the topic in a more compelling way than even the Paris Climate Accord. The ongoing debate brought a wider variety of voices to the conversation.



**2. Weather breaks cycle with Q1 surge:** Weather is typically a bigger concern during harvest (which aligns with Q3). A combination of heavy rains and snowmelt flooded swathes of Midwest farmland that grow the bulk of the country's grains (corn, soy and wheat).



**3. Farm policy, hunger and international trade fall out of focus:** President Trump signed the 2018 Farm Bill in December, effectively ending negotiations about policy issues from crop subsidies and food stamps. Industry groups and other special interests quieted as trade negotiations appeared to make progress.

“TELL US WHICH FOODS ARE MORE NUTRITIOUS. TELL US WHICH FOODS ARE MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY. BUT, DON'T PRESUME TO KNOW HOW MUCH ONE VALUES TASTE VS. NUTRITION, OR ENVIRONMENT VS. NUTRITION, OR PRICE VS. ENVIRONMENT. AND, RECOGNIZE THAT WE CAN'T HAVE IT ALL. LIFE IS FULL OF TRADE-OFFS.”

— JAYSON LUSK,  
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
DEPARTMENT HEAD,  
PURDUE UNIVERSITY

## Timeline: Important Events This Quarter

While the top ten topics highlight the biggest concerns in food production, the most salient events do not always fall neatly into a category and often bridge several topics. Here we highlight the events that sparked the most conversations.

Jan. 10	President Trump speaks at Farm Bureau's annual conference
Jan. 16	<i>EAT-Lancet</i> publishes report on "healthy diets from sustainable food systems"
Jan. 25	Federal government shutdown ends
Feb. 3	Bud Light airs Super Bowl commercials attacking corn syrup in competitors' beer
Feb. 7	Members of Congress introduce the Green New Deal resolution
Feb. 22	The Kraft Heinz Company writes assets down \$15.4 billion from 2015 merger deal
March 5	FDA Administrator Scott Gottlieb announces resignation, effective April 5
March 7	USDA and FDA agree to share oversight of cell-cultured proteins
March 21	Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue offers aid to flood victims in the Midwest
March 27	Jury awards man \$80 million for role of glyphosate in illness
April 1	Burger King debuts plant-based Impossible Whopper
April 12	CDC declares multistate outbreak of <i>E. coli</i> linked to ground beef
April 18	USDA begins pilot program for online purchases using food stamps
April 24	Walmart announces an independent supply chain for angus beef

**About this report:** The Intel Distillery systematically captures, analyzes and reviews important food and beverage news, trends, and policy issues, filtered through 1,500 of the most influential voices in the industry. Our quarterly reports serve as a bird's-eye view of food production, capturing insights from every step in the food chain: from seed to feed, farm to fork, and regulations to media publications. The top ten topics are a snapshot of the topics most frequently discussed by industry leaders and provide insight into these leaders' priorities.

**The full report, which includes recaps of influential conversations about each topic, is available upon request.**

The Intel Distillery also provides customized reporting and analysis on individual topics, such as labeling policies and the rising tide of alternative proteins. For more information about how The Intel Distillery can help you be more knowledgeable about the food and beverage industry, visit [TheIntelDistillery.com](http://TheIntelDistillery.com) or contact [Dennis Ryan \(dryan@bader-rutter.com\)](mailto:Dennis.Ryan@dryan@bader-rutter.com).