

# What's Trending in Food & Bev

Top Ten Topics: Summer 2019



## When It Rains It Pours ... and Trade Winds Aren't Helping



This quarter, the intrinsic link between weather and the food system was clearer than ever. The wettest spring on record caused floods and planting delays across the Midwest — adding to a list of billion-dollar complications that echoed throughout the food system. **Weather, climate change** and **environmental stewardship** go hand in hand. All three moved up the ranks as influential voices grappled with the food industry's impact on air, soil and water quality and committed to steps to address these environmental issues. **International trade** also rose as lawmakers and industry organizations navigated the

uncertainties of trade talks with China and the pending renewal of the United States-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) trade agreement.

This summary highlights the Bader Rutter Intel Distillery quarterly report from Q2 2019. Each quarter, we rank and analyze the Top Ten Topics in the food and beverage business. Our signature Market Driving Topics infographic, affectionately known as the “spaghetti” chart, reveals the interactive relationships between various key topics over the past year.

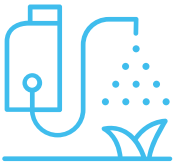
## Three other substantial trends in Q2 2019:



**1. Business-related conversations rose in importance this quarter, displacing health concerns among the highest ranks.** Heavy rains and trade wars put pressure on input prices for food processors, manufacturers and importers. As a result, headlines that warned of rising food prices carried more weight than those about diet trends or its health impacts.



**2. Climate change, which made its Top Ten debut last quarter, climbed further still this quarter.** While many connected rainy weather with climate change, the long-term effects on food production drove more conversations. Congress heard testimony about farmers' efforts to adapt to changing growing conditions. Meanwhile, reporters raised concerns that the Trump administration suppressed research on the topic.



**3. Discussions of pesticide use in food production fell from the top spot last quarter, but remained dominant thanks to two big stories.** A California jury hit pesticide producer Bayer with a \$2 billion penalty for glyphosate-based Roundup's role in causing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Additionally, states and the federal government disagreed about the safety of the insecticide chlorpyrifos.

“THIS IS THE POLITICAL GAMESMANSHIP GOING ON AROUND THE WORLD ... IT SEEMS THAT AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTS IN PARTICULAR ARE BECOMING A LITTLE BIT OF A WEAPON AS IT RELATES TO POLICIES THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH FOOD.”

— SPECIALTY FOOD ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT PHIL KAFARAKIS

[CNBC NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT](#)

## 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.

April 1	Burger King tests plant-based Impossible Whopper
April 18	USDA launches pilot program for online use of food stamps
May 2	Beyond Meat issues initial public offering
May 10	Tariffs on \$325B worth of Chinese goods rise from 10% to 25%
May 15	Study finds that ultra-processed foods are linked to mortality
May 17	United States reaches agreements with Mexico and Canada to end tariffs
May 23	FDA backs “Best if Used By” labels
June 4	Activist group publishes video of animal abuse at Fair Oaks Farms
June 7	WHO celebrates inaugural World Food Safety Day
June 12	President Trump issues executive order to streamline biotechnology approvals
June 23	<i>Politico</i> accuses USDA of burying climate change research
July 11	Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee hears public comments on 2020 guidelines
July 24	Cargill commits to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in its beef supply chain by 30%

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