Many new and growing restaurant concepts that focus on sustainability, health, and access to quality food are growing strongly. Venture funding is slowing and some new concepts are closing or making compromises.

Restaurant suppliers benefited from improving sustainability, safety, and transparency, including the substantial progress in removing human antibiotics from large-scale poultry production. The federal government increased inspections of imported foods to address fraud. Better traceability could lead to even more benefits.

Restaurant companies with sound sustainability and risk management programs continue to gain favor from investors. Equity is going into companies that offer solutions like new plant proteins. Investors are concerned about conditions in some countries that supply labor and goods to the restaurant industry and expect greater disclosure.

Chefs and operators continue to increase plant-forward offerings and reduce portion sizes. With continued menu innovation and more widespread adoption throughout the restaurant industry, these could become the new normal.

Changes in consumer attitudes were mixed, with red meat consumption declining modestly among some, along with increased interest in organic food. The responses to calorie labeling have been mixed.

Government policies are finally supporting local foods, a priority spearheaded by America’s chefs. The combination of culinary, policy, and business efforts has set the stage for accelerated growth in production and demand.

A year of progress overall, with increased awareness of animal welfare, was thanks in part to efforts of chefs and restaurant companies. Some big livestock producers are now adopting alternative practices, and new policy measures raised standards in some states.

The American diet continued to become healthier with important reductions in trans fats and sugar-sweetened beverages; continued, modest decline in red and processed meat; and a small increase in fruits, whole grains, healthy fats, nuts, and legumes. Recent improvements have yet to curb adult obesity rates.

Progress continued in the past year, as red meat production and consumption in the U.S. again declined modestly, while plant-based choices became more widely available on America’s menus. Climate change played a role, reducing meat supplies and raising costs, providing the business case for further lowering meat consumption.

The foodservice industry continues to find new ways to feature fruits and especially vegetables. However, despite a small increase in fruit intake, the potential of fruits and vegetables is not yet being enjoyed in hard numbers reflecting total national consumption and production.

The restaurant industry and seafood suppliers continue to provide their customers with high-quality fish and seafood, along with the nutritional benefits of eating more. Challenges continue to include less scrupulous vendors that overpromise and under-deliver on the offer of more sustainable seafood.

More leading chefs and foodservice companies started to think about low-carbon menu options. Change is evident in the industry, but risks from climate change are moving even faster, now causing food safety concerns.

A few leaders in the food industry have begun to pay attention to water issues even as much-needed rainfall in California provided relief for regional agriculture. Faster action is needed as groundwater depletion and long-term drought forecasts in the West and elsewhere could weigh heavily on future profitability.

Restaurant companies continue to act to protect public health. More companies pledged to source animal products raised without antibiotics. The rate of increased use in livestock production slowed, but use still increased. Regulatory loopholes allowing the use of antibiotics for disease control remain.

This year, soil erosion and phosphorus contamination from farming dropped, although levels are still too high. Food imports and the large amount of land used for agriculture challenge efforts to preserve biodiversity in the U.S. and globally. Local sourcing needs to scale.