

The Future of Foods in a World of Personalized Health

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Public health is advancing from a disease treatment paradigm to disease prevention and personalized health. This shift will impact the health care system and also all aspects of food and agriculture. Health care will profit from a system of personal assessment that measures and predicts health trajectories of individuals as subtle variations in their metabolic, physiologic and immunologic status. The fields of Nutrigenomics and Metabolomics are building a clearer understanding of the biological reality that humans are indeed different in their responses to diet. Health assessment will become an important part of routine care and industries that provide these services will increase in value and will align more closely with the food development industries. The greater information content of personal health will be managed by devices that are similar to those responsible for personal communications, entertainment and finance. Food, drug and lifestyle industries will take advantage of the greater personal knowledge of consumers to provide a wider range of products and services. Consumers will be able to choose alternatives that deliver solutions both deeper into health, i.e. more effective and safer solutions, and wider into more health values, than are currently available. The entire agricultural enterprise will share a coordinated role in improving human health through foods. This will require greater diversity of agricultural commodities, greater flexibility in food processing and greater education of consumers. The ultimate benefits to consumers and to the industries that supply their food products and services will be considerable.