

Tetra Pak Index 2020

COVID-19 and the Food Safety–Environment Dilemma

Tetra Pak®
PROTECTS WHAT'S GOOD

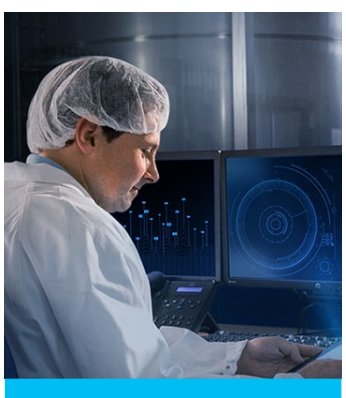
Top 10 takeaways from Tetra Pak Index 2020

01 COVID-19 has transformed the consumer landscape

COVID-19 has displaced the environment as the number one consumer concern, while other health-related issues have fallen sharply. Concerns around food safety and food security have risen significantly as consumers try to balance these with their worries about the environment, highlighting the dilemma that they face between these two subjects.

02 The changing interplay between food safety and the environment

Food safety is rated an equal concern for society as COVID-19. Health is now connected to heightened issues of food safety and hygiene; two-thirds say that being healthy is being safe. Improving food safety is cited as the number one priority for manufacturers. And this expectation will only increase as we need to feed a growing population, with food packaging playing a critical role.



68%

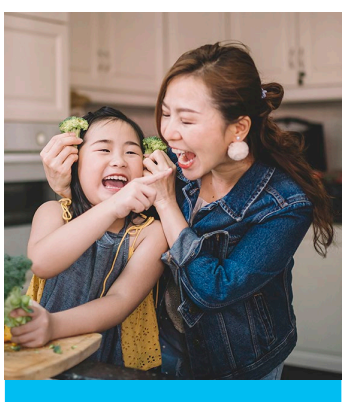
of consumers agree that food safety is a major concern for society.

03 Transparency and trust are more important than ever

Consumers see manufacturers as responsible for food safety. Transparency is key, with almost three in five consumers saying they want to know all they can about product production. Provenance is among the top purchase drivers.

04 Food waste is rising up the agenda

The impact of COVID-19 on supply chains has accelerated awareness of food waste as a key issue. More than three-quarters now see food waste as a concern – and limiting it is seen by consumers as one of the top three priorities for manufacturers.



54%

of consumers connect safe food with healthy food – the number one association.

05 Consumers want to help – but labelling is key

Consumers see preventing food waste as the number one environmental issue that they can influence. But confusing "best before" labelling is a barrier. While regulators work to simplify/clarify expiry dates, there is an opportunity for better communication, including on-pack information or via connected packages.

06 Concern for the environment remains very strong

The environment is still a major global concern, behind only COVID-19, with two-thirds of consumers believing that we're heading for disaster unless we change our habits quickly. Two-thirds say pandemic lockdowns brought environmental improvements they would like to see maintained, suggesting an appetite for change and "build back better" initiatives.



70%

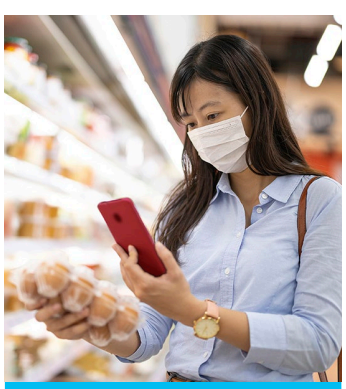
of consumers consider that a package being made from plant-based material is relevant for them.

07 Sustainable packaging matters

Consumers see sustainable packaging as a top priority for manufacturers, and four in five say companies should be obliged to help with the recycling/reuse of their packaging. Carton is considered among the most environmentally friendly options, while plastic waste remains a key concern, fostering industry interest in renewable materials.

08 Convergence is increasing

The convergence of health and the environment we observed in last year's Index has grown to encompass other concerns, as "people" and "planet" issues increasingly overlap. Health is now connected to issues around food safety and hygiene. On the other side of the equation, continued strong concern for the environment is connected with other sustainability issues, notably food waste, which consumers believe they can influence.



47%

of consumers believe that preventing food waste is an area where they can make a positive difference.

09 What consumers want

The number one preferred innovation is to protect food for longer to avoid waste and maintain nutritional value. The next in line is intelligent expiry dates – another factor addressing food waste. The top five choices all relate to food safety. The top two environmentally friendly choices are minimal packaging and recyclability, which also rate highly.

10 Key conclusion

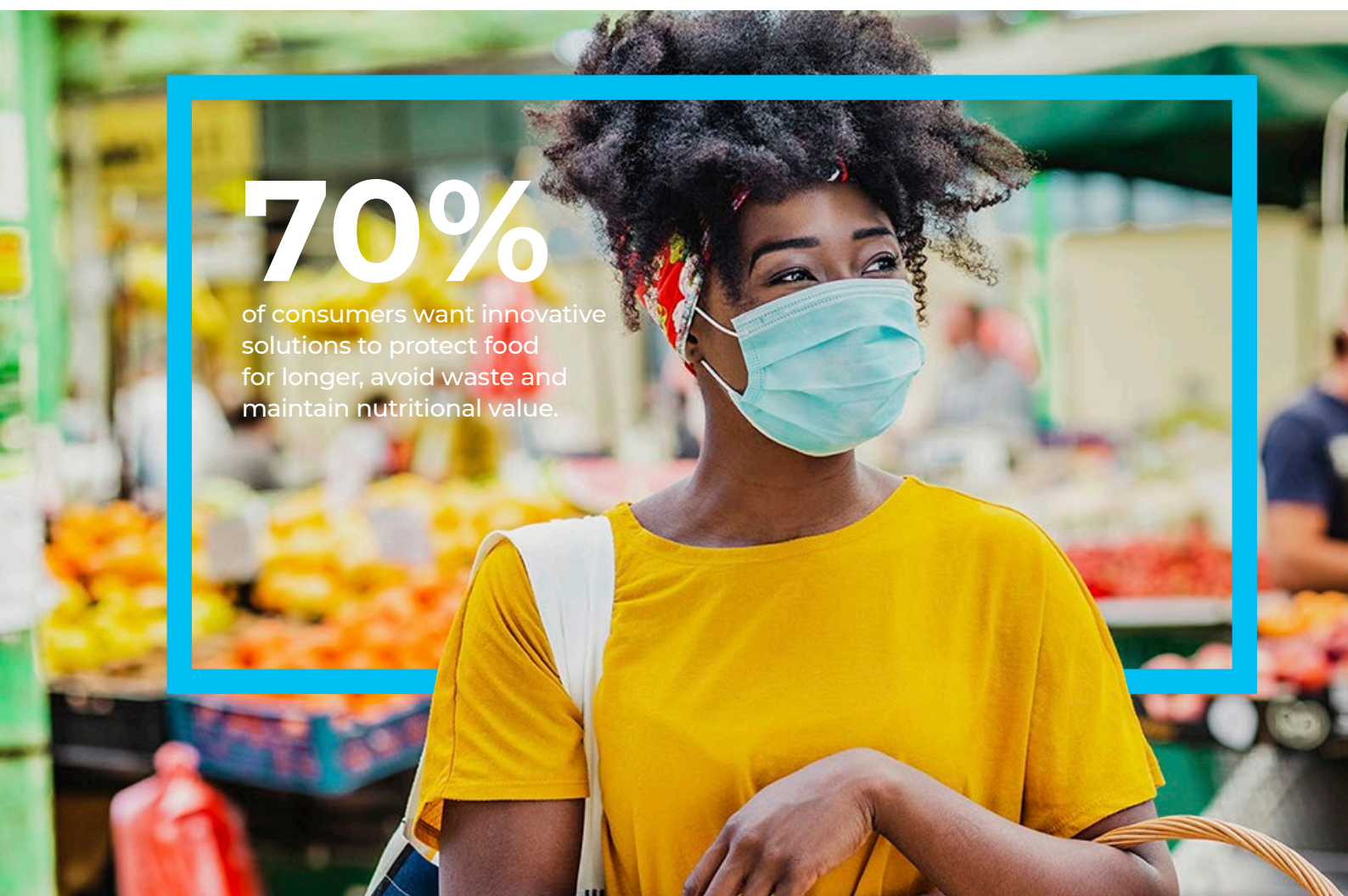
The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the status quo, creating a new paradoxical landscape of consumer concerns and needs. Food safety, security and waste have become much more pressing issues, while concern for the environment remains strikingly strong. Traditional boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred, as issues around food, people and planet become more entwined.

There has never been a better time to start a wider debate about sustainability and the role of packaging going forward, as we strive to provide safe access to food for the world's growing population while protecting the planet itself. Companies can demonstrate purpose by rising to this dual challenge and solving the dilemma that COVID-19 has created between food safety and environmental concerns.



49%

of consumers believe environmental issues are among the biggest concerns facing the world today, with only COVID-19 scoring higher.



70%

of consumers want innovative solutions to protect food for longer, avoid waste and maintain nutritional value.