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ORAL PRESENTATION

Assessing the environmental impact of functional foods

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Abstract

The emergence and significance of functional foods have drawn attention to their production's ecological consequences. Integrating sustainability in the production process of these foods, known for their positive effects on human health, is critical. A mixed-method approach was employed, utilizing quantitative analysis of industry data and qualitative evaluation through an extensive literature review. The study encompassed various stages, including raw material sourcing, production, processing, packaging, transportation, and consumer behavior. Findings indicate that functional food production may require higher energy and water resources, but advantages were observed in waste management and transportation stages. The study reveals a multifaceted relationship between functional food production and environmental sustainability. Innovative technologies and environmentally friendly methods present potential solutions to mitigate adverse effects. Collaboration within the industry and with regulators, researchers, and consumers is imperative for a holistic approach to environmental stewardship. This research underscores the importance of considering the environmental impacts in the burgeoning field of functional foods, highlighting their increasing significance in human nutrition and health. It calls for targeted strategies, guided by the complexity and variability observed, emphasizing the need for future research, effective policy formulation, and industry-wide sustainable practices. The proliferation of functional health foods is necessary, and continued research is required to facilitate their widespread adoption. The findings provide a basis for further exploration and a pathway towards an environmentally responsible approach in the production of functional foods.

Keywords: Environmental impact, Functional foods, Sustainable production.