

Less than 1 in 4 Food Firms Recognize AI's Role in Sustainability Despite Rising ESG Demands Reveals Foods Connected

Survey reveals that while 70% of food businesses have adopted some form of AI, few are tapping into its full potential to drive sustainability efforts.

BELFAST, UNITED KINGDOM, March 26, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New research from [Foods Connected](#) reveals that while 70% of food businesses have adopted some form of AI, few are tapping into, or are aware of, its full potential to drive sustainability efforts.

Key takeaways:

- AI adoption: 70% of food businesses now use AI technology, highlighting a strong commitment to digital transformation
- Unmet sustainability potential: Despite AI adoption, fewer than 25% of food firms see its potential for achieving ESG goals
- Biggest potential for food firms: Food safety and product quality top the list when it comes to areas where businesses can see the biggest potential
- Skills gap: 59% of leaders call for more AI training investment, with 96% planning additional AI investment within the next five years to close the skills gap

Foods Connected - headquartered in Northern Ireland - is now calling on technology companies to focus on education and sees the potential for new jobs in the sector due to the current skills gap.

The report published today ([link](#)) on AI Adoption, Attitudes, and Ambitions within the Agri-food Sector highlights the willingness to embrace technology for long-term growth. Currently, just one in five food companies recognise AI's potential to contribute to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) objectives. Conversely, firms felt that food safety and product quality are



where businesses will see the biggest potential for AI.

Foods Connected surveyed over 500 senior leaders* across food manufacturing, processing, retail, distribution, and food service to assess AI adoption levels and the challenges businesses face. Food manufacturers are leading the way, with 49% utilizing AI and machine learning technologies at the moment, compared to 36% in food retail.

The research shows that while 70% of businesses overall are currently using AI in some form, and 96% have set aside budget for future AI investment, there are still significant gaps. Many business leaders - 59% - say further investment in training is necessary to close the skills gap, with 96% planning to invest in AI over the next five years.

As the sector shifts from early-stage trials to long-term investments, the focus is increasingly on integrating AI into supply chains in safe, secure, and sustainable ways.

While AI has been a part of the agri-food sector for years - being used for predictive maintenance and improving manufacturing operations - its potential is expanding. Advances in generative AI, such as Large Language Models (LLMs), are transforming customer experience, product development, and creating efficiencies across new areas of the supply chain. This progress also offers significant opportunities for meeting sustainability targets.

“

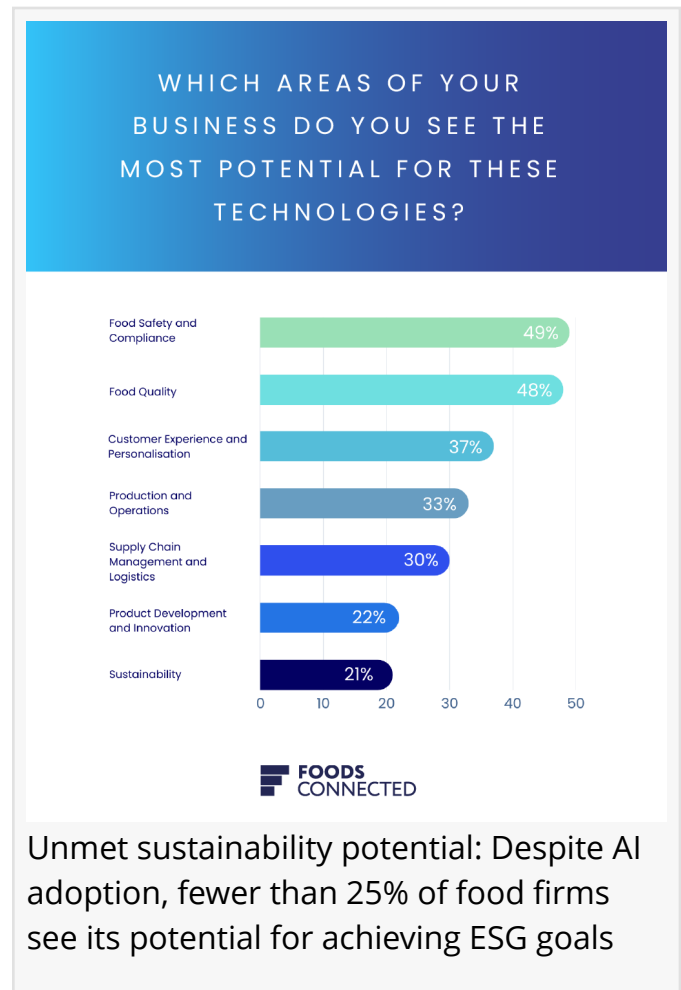
AI is at a critical turning point for the food sector in 2025. We know AI can optimise production, streamline operations, and improve customer experiences - but that's just the beginning.”

Stephanie Brooks, Head of Research & Innovation

Stephanie Brooks, Head of Research & Innovation at Foods Connected says,

“We were surprised to see that many businesses don't currently recognise the potential for AI in supporting ESG goals, considering AI's capacity to enhance data capture and optimise supply chains to support sustainability goals.

AI is at a critical turning point for the food sector in 2025. We know AI can optimise production, streamline operations, and improve customer experiences - but that's just the beginning.



Education and addressing the skills gap are key for leaders now when investing in digital infrastructure. AI providers have an important role in educating the industry on this potential. ROI from digital technology isn't always immediately apparent, so it's crucial for technology providers and data experts to help businesses understand how AI and data can be leveraged strategically, making ROI clearer and reducing entry barriers for those wanting to truly digitise."

INFO FOR EDITORS

*The research was conducted by Censuswide, surveying 501 senior professionals working in food manufacturing, processing, retail, food service, or distribution in the UK and US. Data collection took place between December 12 and December 18, 2024. Censuswide follows the Market Research Society's code of conduct and ESOMAR principles and is a member of the British Polling Council.

Jo Baird

Foods Connected

+44 7814 267444

joanne@joannebaird.com

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/796962356>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.