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Experts say artificial intelligence is the future but have yet to convince those who want to stay compliant

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The food industry is increasingly looking to technological solutions for logistical problems. From artificial intelligence (AI) to self-driving delivery cars to blockchain solutions for supply chains, major grocers are competing with each other to provide the highest quality and safest food possible in the most efficient way.

The most recent headline concerned Albertsons Companies LLC, one of the largest food and drug retailers in the United States, joining the blockchain-based IBM Food Trust network. The network gained media attention after the first major retailer, Walmart, Inc., signed on, mandating that direct suppliers of several different food items join its blockchain by Jan. 31, 2019, and that farmers, logistics firms and business partners of these suppliers join by Sept. 30, 2019.

Walmart joined the network following two widespread outbreaks of E. coli contamination in romaine lettuce. The food industry initiated two costly recalls, but not before dozens of people grew sick. The contamination led to several industry-wide initiatives, including the Leafy Greens Food Safety Task Force and a statement from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's commissioner, Scott Gottlieb, calling for "widespread ... adoption of existing and emerging technologies" and a thorough review of the Food Safety Modernization Act's Produce Rule and Preventive Controls for Human Food Rule.

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