

Blockchain-Enabled Sustainable Supply Chain (BESSC): Securing and Optimizing Food Distribution

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OPEN ACCESS

Research Article

Received: June 24, 2025

Revised: August 6, 2025

Accepted: August 22, 2025

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Publisher:

[Aarambh Quill Publications](https://www.aarambhquill.com/)

ABSTRACT

Food waste and safety issues are major concerns as a result of increasing global demand for food with supply chain inefficiencies. Traditional food supply chains are characterized by a lack of transparency, traceability, and real-time optimization, which leaves them susceptible to fraud, contamination, and inefficiencies. To mitigate the above-listed issues, this chapter presents a Blockchain-Enabled Sustainable Supply Chain (BESSC) Framework, which integrates Blockchain, Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL), and Quantum Secure Hash Algorithm (QSHA) to improve the food distribution, reduce its wastage, and maintain the food safety. The BESSC framework implements the use of blockchain technology to build a modified ledger that is transparent and cannot be easily tampered with, allowing real-time tracking of a food product through its journey in the chain, from production to end-of-life. Visibility into where components are stored and transported is also embedded with sensors to further reduce the chance of contamination, as smart contracts enforce company compliance with food safety regulations. The algorithm is a Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL)-based Food Waste Reduction Algorithm (FWRA), which dynamically determines the optimal supply chain operations of systematic balancing of supply and demand, prediction of food spoilage, and efficient food redistribution. Additionally, QSHA-512 is sensitive, as it can provide more data security, preventing unauthorized modifications and protecting the authenticity of food safety records. By implementing decentralized Food Surplus Exchange (FSE) platforms, surplus food can be efficiently redistributed, reducing waste and enhancing food security. The proposed framework ensures eco-friendly, efficient, and fraud-resistant supply chain operations, making it a scalable solution for governments, food producers, and logistics providers aiming for a sustainable future.

Keywords: Blockchain, Sustainable Supply Chain, Food Waste Reduction, Food Safety, Deep Reinforcement Learning, Quantum Secure Hash Algorithm, Smart Contracts, IoT-enabled Traceability, Supply Chain Optimization, Decentralized Food Surplus Exchange.

1. INTRODUCTION

The food supply chain at the global level is characterized as an intricate, multi-component system, which includes the areas of food production, processing, transportation, storage and distribution that span large areas in the geography [1]. Although new technologies have increased productivity on the farm, an increasing world population, together with urbanization, place enormous pressure on food distribution systems. The inefficiency in these supply chains and the excessive amount of food waste are among the most challenging issues to tackle today [2].

1.1 Background on Global Food Supply Chain Challenges

FAO of the United Nations indicated that about 1.3 billion tonnes of food produced for human consumption was wasted every year, and nearly one-third of food globally is wasted (Fig 1). This results not only in economic losses, but it also has serious environmental and social impacts like the emission of greenhouse gases, misuse of water and land, and increased food insecurity in vulnerable social groups [3].



Figure 1: Global Food Supply Chain Challenges

And food security is also a problem. Foodborne contamination, fraud and mislabeling have repeatedly undermined public confidence and posed significant public health threats. In non-blockchain-oriented food supply chains, the absence of end-to-end transparency and traceability causes delayed traces for finding the sources of contaminant, which in turn slow down responses to food safety crises and worsen the damage [4].

1.2 Importance of Food Safety, Traceability, and Waste Reduction

The need to protect the public against food that is unsafe or of poor quality is critical to public health as well as to meeting the regulatory requirements of food producers and retailers and to the preservation of their branding. Tracing food products from farm to table — knowing where food is contaminated, recalling it effectively, and making sure consumers have access to ethically sourced food — is crucial. Moreover, in response to the aforementioned quality issues, food losses and waste at different supply chain levels, ranging from overproduction and inadequate storage to inefficient distribution and consumer discard, represent a tremendous threat to sustainable development [5].

By improving food safety, traceability and waste reduction, industry and government can improve efficiency all while contributing to the larger United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) [6]. Yet rolling out these enhancements to a highly fragmented global supply chain is a monumental if not unrealistic task that is hard to accomplish without being propelled by advanced technology.

1.3 The Role of Emerging Technologies in Solving These Problems

Disruptive technologies like Blockchain, Artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and Quantum Cryptography are changing the way the supply chains are governed. Blockchain technology in particular provides immutable ledgers in a decentralized environment, which when securely recording every transaction across the food value chain, have the potential to greatly improve trust and transparency [7]. In addition, inter-acting with IoT-enabled sensors, both the movement and the state of food products can be tracked in real-time, which facilitates proactive decision making and early detection of potential problems [8].

Artificial Intelligence (AI), in general, and Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL), in particular, offers intelligence to optimize food distribution, predict demand and spoilage and alert timely interventions. DRL agents are enabled to learn about dynamic environment and to take the best decisions in uncertainty conditions, and therefore can be good in tackling the demand and supply uncertainty in food supply chains [9].

In addition, with cybersecurity being ever more important, particularly when handling critical food data, Quantum Secure Hash Algorithms (QSHA) [10] present quantum-resistant security protocols for ensuring the authenticity, integrity and protection against unwanted tampering of data. Adopting these technologies in a cohesive model can provide a competitive advantage to tackle the systemic inefficiencies that plague conventional food supply chains.

1.4 Objective and Contributions of the BESSC Framework

This chapter introduces a novel Blockchain-Enabled Sustainable Supply Chain (BESSC) framework, designed to secure, optimize, and modernize the food distribution ecosystem. The primary objective of the BESSC is to enhance supply chain efficiency while ensuring sustainability, transparency, and food safety as shown in Fig 2.

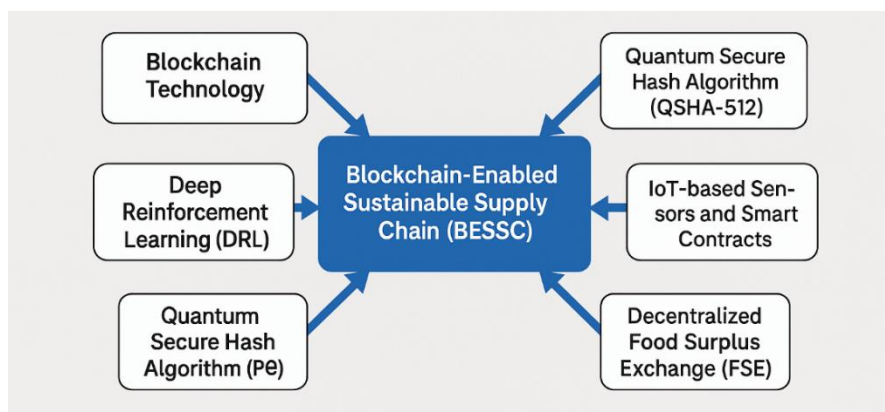


Figure 2: BESSC Framework

The proposed framework integrates:

- **Blockchain Technology** [11] to provide a tamper-proof, transparent, and decentralized record of transactions;
- **Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL)** [12] to dynamically optimize supply-demand balance, predict spoilage, and minimize food waste;
- **Quantum Secure Hash Algorithm (QSHA-512)** to protect data integrity and reinforce cybersecurity;
- **IoT-based sensors and smart contracts** to automate compliance, track environmental conditions, and enforce business rules;
- **A Decentralized Food Surplus Exchange (FSE)** [13] to enable real-time redistribution of surplus food to prevent wastage and improve accessibility.

The BESSC framework is to fill the food surplus-shortage gap, benefiting participants (governments, farmers, distributors, retailers, consumers) at each echelon of food supply chains. As much as BESSC focuses on better food safety and better practises for the environment, it also enables a stricter generational base for future food logistics across the world, by providing real-time visibility and smart decision models in the supply chain.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conventional food supply chain comprises a number of integrated processes such as production, processing, packing, storing, transporting, retailing, and consuming. Such chains are typically linear, siloed, and sealed off to a large extent from anyone beyond the responsible stakeholders. The vast majority of conventional supply chain management rely on extensive manual documentation and centralized recording, which hinders the traceability of the products throughout the supply chain [14]. This disconnect is responsible for delays, duplicative work and susceptibility to spoilage, contamination and food fraud. The lack of transparency in the status of inventory, logistics and the source of products severely limits real time decision making [15].

2.1 Overview of Traditional Food Supply Chain Management

In most developing areas, inefficiency is centered on lack of infrastructure, limited cold chain facilities and lack of coordination between producers and distributors. These structural deficiencies frequently lead to food surplus in one region and food shortage in another area which brings economic and nutritional losses [16]. Although technology has advanced, traditional methods continue to be reactive, not proactive, and do not respond in real-time to demand fluctuations or pollution events [17].

2.2 Existing Approaches to Food Waste Reduction and Traceability

Over the years, multiple strategies have been proposed to address food waste and enhance traceability. Food waste reduction methods include:

- **Demand forecasting and inventory optimization;**
- **Donation platforms and surplus redistribution networks;**
- **Food recovery hierarchies** that prioritize reuse, animal feed, and composting.

Meanwhile, traceability has largely relied on barcodes, RFID tags, and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems [18]. While these technologies may offer rudimentary tracking, they do not go far enough in providing end-to-end, real-time visibility, particularly in highly complex global food networks. Centralized systems are as well subject to single points of trust and failure as being susceptible to abuse and tampering.

While some countries have adopted similar regulatory frames such as the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) in the US and traceability legislation in EU, these efforts grapple with the challenge of data stuck in silos is, scarce interoperability and high costs of compliance [19].

2.3 Blockchain in Supply Chains: Success Stories and Limitations

In recent time, blockchain has become increasingly popular in supply chain for the potential of offering immutable, distributed ledgers that maintain clear history of transactions transparently [20]. In the food industry, for example, players such as Walmart, IBM Food Trust, Nestlé, and Carrefour have tested blockchain systems to track items such as lettuce, pork and baby formula on their journey from farm to shelf [21]. These pilots demonstrated that blockchain could reduce traceability times from days to seconds, enabling faster recalls and higher consumer trust.

However, despite these promising results, there are notable limitations:

- Scalability concerns due to high transaction volumes;
- Energy consumption in consensus mechanisms (especially in public blockchains);

- Data accuracy dependency on input sources (i.e., “garbage in, garbage out”);
- Interoperability with legacy systems;
- Challenges in stakeholder adoption, particularly among small and medium enterprises.

Thus, while blockchain brings value, its success hinges on careful integration with other technologies and governance models that promote collaboration and standardization.

2.4 Use of AI/DRL in Supply Chain Optimization

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed supply chain operations by enabling predictive analytics, route optimization, and decision automation [22]. Specifically, Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL)—a subfield of AI that combines deep learning with reinforcement learning—has shown potential in dynamic and uncertain environments. DRL agents learn optimal policies by interacting with the environment, making them ideal for adaptive planning in logistics, inventory control, and demand-supply balancing [23].

Recent studies have shown DRL’s success in multi-echelon inventory management, fleet routing, and perishable goods scheduling. Unlike static models, DRL continuously improves its performance over time, even as environmental conditions shift.

Nonetheless, DRL applications often require large datasets and robust computational resources for training. Additionally, the black-box nature of deep learning poses challenges for interpretability and transparency, which are critical in regulatory contexts [24].

2.5 Quantum Cryptography and QSHA in Data Security

As data breaches and cyberattacks become more sophisticated, traditional encryption methods face increasing vulnerability—particularly with the advent of quantum computing. Quantum computers can solve certain mathematical problems exponentially faster than classical computers, threatening cryptographic algorithms such as RSA and ECC [25].

To address this, Quantum Secure Hash Algorithms (QSHA) and post-quantum cryptography have emerged as promising solutions. QSHA algorithms are resistant to both classical and quantum attacks, making them highly suitable for securing sensitive data in blockchain environments [26]. QSHA-512, in particular, offers:

- **Increased hash complexity**, making reverse-engineering infeasible;
- **Tamper-proof integrity checks** for transaction logs;
- **Enhanced protection** for identity authentication and data provenance.

Despite its advantages, the practical adoption of QSHA remains in early stages, with limited real-world deployment and standardization efforts still evolving.

2.6 Gaps Identified in Existing Solutions

A review of current literature and industry practices reveals several **gaps**:

1. **Lack of integrated systems** that combine traceability, optimization, and security in a unified framework;
2. **Insufficient adoption of DRL** for real-time, adaptive supply chain decisions;
3. **Limited use of quantum-resistant cryptography** in food safety data protection;
4. **Fragmented food surplus management** lacking decentralized and scalable platforms;
5. **Ineffective interoperability** between emerging technologies and traditional infrastructure;
6. **Poor inclusivity** for small-scale producers due to cost and technical barriers.

These gaps justify the need for a holistic, intelligent, and secure solution, such as the BESSC framework, that leverages blockchain, AI, and quantum cryptography for a sustainable and optimized food supply chain.

3. OVERVIEW OF THE BESSC FRAMEWORK

3.1 Conceptual Architecture of the BESSC System

The Blockchain-Enabled Sustainable Supply Chain (BESSC) framework is a unified, intelligent, and secure food distribution model that integrates Blockchain Technology, Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL), Quantum Secure Hash Algorithm (QSHA-512), IoT-based monitoring, and Smart Contracts to enhance transparency, traceability, security, and optimization of food supply chains.

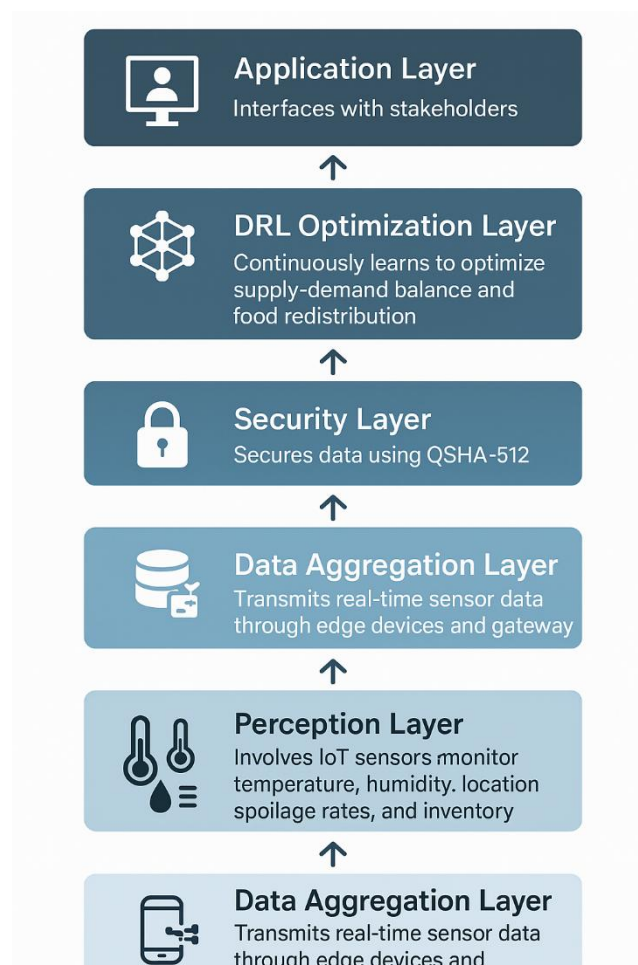


Figure 3: System Architecture Modules

The system architecture is modular and comprises six essential layers as shown in Fig 3 which describes below:

1. **Perception Layer** – Involves IoT sensors that monitor temperature, humidity, location, spoilage rates, and inventory.
2. **Data Aggregation Layer** – Transmits real-time sensor data through edge devices and gateways.
3. **Blockchain Layer** – Stores validated transactions and traceability records securely.
4. **DRL Optimization Layer** – Continuously learns to optimize supply-demand balance and food redistribution.
5. **Security Layer** – Secures data using QSHA-512.
6. **Application Layer** – Interfaces with stakeholders (producers, transporters, retailers, NGOs) through the Food Surplus Exchange (FSE).

3.2 Key Components of the BESSC Framework

3.2.1 Blockchain Layer

Blockchain forms the core infrastructure, ensuring immutability, decentralization, and traceability.

Each transaction (e.g., harvest, shipment, delivery) is recorded in a **block**, hashed, and appended to the chain. A simple representation:

$$\text{Block}_n = \text{Hash}(\text{Block}_{n-1} || \text{Data}_n || \text{Timestamp}_n) \quad (1)$$

Where, || denotes concatenation, Hash ensures data integrity, Block_{n-1} links the chain together securely.

3.2.2 DRL-Based Food Waste Reduction Algorithm (FWRA)

The Food Waste Reduction Algorithm (FWRA) uses Deep Reinforcement Learning to dynamically balance supply and demand, predict spoilage, and redistribute surplus.

Agent–Environment Interaction:

- State s_t : Current inventory, demand forecast, perishability status.
- Action a_t : Reallocate, store, donate, or sell.
- Reward r_t : Minimize waste, maximize freshness, ensure timely delivery.

The agent optimizes a policy $\pi(a|s)$ to maximize expected reward:

$$J(\pi) = E_{\pi} \left[\sum_{t=0}^T \gamma^t r_t \right] \quad (2)$$

Where, γ : Discount factor for future rewards, T: Time horizon.

3.2.3 Quantum Secure Hash Algorithm (QSHA-512)

The QSHA-512 is used to hash data for tamper-proof security.

Given an input x , the QSHA produces a 512-bit digest:

$$h = \text{QSHA}_{512}(x) \quad (3)$$

Properties:

- One-way function: cannot derive x from h ,
- Collision resistance: $\text{QSHA}_{512}(x_1) \neq \text{QSHA}_{512}(x_2)$ for $x_1 \neq x_2$,
- Quantum-resistance: Safe from Grover's and Shor's algorithms.

Each record stored on the blockchain is double-encrypted with QSHA-512 to ensure privacy and authenticity.

3.2.4 IoT & Smart Sensors

In the BESSC framework, IoT and smart sensors form the foundational layer for real-time data acquisition, enabling intelligent decision-making throughout the food supply chain. These sensors are deployed at various nodes—including farms, storage units, and transportation vehicles—to monitor critical parameters such as temperature T , humidity H , GPS location L , and expiry countdown E .

This continuous data stream allows the system to predict the spoilage probability of perishable food items with a high degree of accuracy. A basic model used for spoilage prediction can be mathematically expressed as:

$$P_{\text{spoil}} = 1 - e^{-\alpha(T-T_{\text{opt}})^2 + \beta(H-H_{\text{opt}})^2} \quad (4)$$

Here, T_{opt} and H_{opt} represent the optimal storage conditions for temperature and humidity, respectively. The constants α and β determine the sensitivity of the spoilage rate to deviations from these optimal values. A rise in temperature or humidity beyond optimal thresholds increases the spoilage probability exponentially, prompting the system to take corrective actions.

The extrapolated spoilage data is input directly to the DRL based Food Waste Reduction Algorithm (FWRA) which can suggest interventions - such as immediate redistribution, priority or cooling changes. This immediate response is key to reducing wastage and maintaining high-quality food throughout the supply chain.

3.2.5 Smart Contracts

In BESSC, smart contracts are self-executing code that is placed on the blockchain and can enforce rules, process transactions, and send alerts or take action based on sensor data. These are very practical agreements for ensuring food safety compliance, triggering excess donation processing and with respect to risk warrants and alerts.

For instance, consider a scenario where the temperature T of a food shipment exceeds the maximum allowable threshold T_{max} for a duration of x hours. A smart contract continuously monitors this parameter and, upon detecting the violation, autonomously performs a series of actions:

- It **flags the affected batch** in the blockchain for traceability.
- It **notifies the assigned transporter** and relevant stakeholders about the anomaly.
- It **triggers a redistribution protocol** through the DRL optimization layer to reroute or utilize the batch before it becomes unusable.

This automation not only accelerates the decision-making process but also ensures that compliance and food safety measures are consistently upheld without human intervention, reducing the risk of oversight or delay.

3.2.6 Decentralized Food Surplus Exchange (FSE)

The Decentralized Food Surplus Exchange (FSE) is a peer-to-peer digital marketplace integrated within the BESSC framework. It connects suppliers with surplus food (e.g., retailers, distributors, farms) to potential recipients such as non-profits, community kitchens, and food banks. The platform is governed by blockchain for transparency and DRL for optimized matching.

The allocation of surplus food is determined using a surplus matching equation:

$$S_{ij} = \min(D_j, Q_i) \times \delta_{ij} \quad (5)$$

In this formula, S_{ij} represents the amount of food matched from supplier i to demander j , Q_i is the available quantity of surplus food at the supplier's end, D_j is the demand or requirement at the receiver's location, δ_{ij} is a feasibility factor, accounting for considerations like transport availability, distance, urgency or delivery constraints.

By factoring δ_{ij} , the system ensures that only logistically feasible and cost-effective transactions are approved. This mechanism enables efficient reallocation of food resources, reduces wastage and promotes equitable access to food across different regions.

The Blockchain-Enabled Sustainable Supply Chain (BESSC) Framework is engineered to tackle the crucial inefficiencies of the conventional food distribution system, such as food waste, traceability issues, fraud risks, and data security threats. Leveraging Blockchain, DRL, QSHA-512, IoT sensors, and Smart Contracts, the BESSC architecture establishes a scalable, and secure system implementable for intelligent food supply chain optimization.

4. BLOCKCHAIN INTEGRATION FOR FOOD TRACEABILITY

Today, in a world where our food supply chain is far more complex, traceability and accountability have become more important. Blockchain is a revolutionary way of safely recording and managing food logistics data amongst several stakeholders. By embedding blockchain on top of the BESSC framework, we guarantee that every single food supply chain from field to table is recorded in an immutable way that everyone can trust.

4.1 Modified Tamper-Proof Ledger Structure

In conventional supply chains there are central databases which are sensitive to tampering and loss of information. By comparison, the blockchain uses an approach known as a shared ledger, where each participant keeps their own copy of the ledger. The BESSC model is based on a newer type of blockchain configuration that not only stores transaction data but also stores some sensor information (temperature, humidity, etc.) and records of when these events were time stamped. All blocks in the chain include:

- Unique Block ID
- Hash of previous block H_{prev}
- Timestamp t
- Product Metadata M
- IoT Sensor Readings $\{T, H, L, E\}$
- Digital Signature σ (via QSHA-512)
- Smart Contract Logs

The block hash is generated using:

$$H_{block} = QSHA512 (H_{prev} || t || M || \text{Sensor Data} || \sigma) \quad (6)$$

This powerful and cryptographically secure design allows Decentralized Database to eliminate tampering and verifying of data. Its integration into BESSC also allows for full real-time traceability of every food product from inception to end of life. At every point of its journey—harvest, pack, transport, store and retail—on-chain events are recorded and added to the blockchain. Consumers, regulators and suppliers can identify origin, handling and time of delivery of any food product by scanning a QR code from a blockchain linked to the product. This also becomes particularly useful in a food SIA situation, where you need to trace back contaminated goods and ensure that not only is traceability maintained, but accountability is enforced.

One strong element of BESSC's blockchain design relies on smart contracts—self-executable code that processes rules. These smart contracts are able to guarantee food safety by checking environmental conditions. For instance, for a batch of food a smart contract is automatically triggered to receive a flag if there is a storage temperature T over T_{max} for a period of x hours. If violated, the system issues automated reactions including giving transporter an alert, flagging the inventory and applying the DRL (Deep Reinforcement Learning) algorithm to redistribute. Real-time enforcement also eliminates latencies and minimizes reliance on manual adaptations.

A real-world example of such a system is the monitoring of a perishable product such as milk. When it's harvested at the farm, the fruit of the dairy farmers' labor is put on the blockchain, along with some environmental measurements and the origin information. IoT sensors attached to the trucks record the temperature and humidity of the milk during transit. What if the temperature when an item is in transport goes beyond safety limits? In this scenario a smart contract is invoked to mark the batch and alerts the transporter, at the time, the DRL model considers other action options, as to diverting and trigger donations via FSE, for example. After arriving in the warehouse and in retail stores, new handling information and timestamps are added to blockchain entries. Consumers can then use a QR code on the carton to see everything the product has gone through in a farm-to-shelf journey, including alerts and predictions of when it will expire.

By this organic utilization of block chain, smart contract and IoT, the BESSC presents full-course digital traceability, real-time food quality monitoring and automatic regulatory compliance for smarter, safer and more sustainable food systems.

5. DEEP REINFORCEMENT LEARNING FOR FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

Regarding supply chain optimization, DRL has proven to be a promising tool for dealing with the complexity and dynamics of an environment in which a decision must be made in the real-time under uncertainty. DRL has successfully combined the adaptive learning feature through reinforcement learning with the pattern detection power of deep learning, and is well-suited for food supply chain affected due to varying demand, perishability constraints, logistics constrained supply and uncertain patterns of spoilage. Under the BESSC architecture, DRL is used to control the FWRA, an intelligent decision-making engine whose learning process is carried out continuously via environmental data, which is used to optimize the supply chain management system to minimize the wastage as far as possible and to operate efficiently.

5.1 FWRA Algorithm Design

The FWRA is formulated as a Markov Decision Process (MDP) in which the system evolves across states and takes actions with the maximum benefit according to a reward function. The state space SSS incorporates factors such as current inventory state, product freshness, environment readings from IoT sensors (e.g., temperature T, humidity H), transportation availability, and local demand levels. The action space A contains actions such as holding inventory, rerouting to Q*1, starting the cooling process, redistributing stock to another region, or donating through the FSE. The reward function R(s,a) is engineered to encourage the policy to take actions to minimize spoilage and waste, while also keeping the system balanced between supply and demand. A simplified recode of the reward function is given by:

$$R(s, a) = -\lambda_1 \cdot W + \lambda_2 \cdot D - \lambda_3 \cdot C \quad (7)$$

Where, W is the amount of food wasted, D is the demand fulfilled, C is the cost incurred n redistribution or storage, $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \lambda_3$ are weighting parameters adjusting the importance of each objective.

An important feature of FWRA is its **spoilage prediction module**, which estimates the probability of degradation based on real-time sensor inputs. For example, the spoilage probability can be calculated using a nonlinear model:

$$P_{\text{spoil}} = 1 - e^{-\alpha(T-T_{\text{opt}})^2 + \beta(H-H_{\text{opt}})^2} \quad (8)$$

Where T_{opt} and H_{opt} are optimal storage conditions, α and β are sensitivity constants. The DRL model uses these predictions to anticipate which items are at risk and preemptively decides whether to cool, redistribute, or donate them.

Supply-demand equilibrium is also a fundamental capability of FWRA. The behaviour of the algorithm is akin to Electricity load shedding at each node: Demand forecasts are continuously re-calculated and the delivery of goods is locally scheduled. If overage is identified in one warehouse and demand spike in another area, FWRA considers the feasibility of transportation, time before expiration, and environmental factors to determine how products should be re-allocated.

The redistribution logic also includes constraints such as transportation capacity, regional food regulations, and delivery deadlines. For example, if milk stored in Warehouse A is nearing expiry and another region reports high demand, FWRA will evaluate the decision matrix and possibly trigger a smart contract to initiate transfer, update the blockchain ledger, and notify involved parties—all autonomously.

6. QUANTUM SECURE HASH ALGORITHM (QSHA) FOR DATA SECURITY

With the food supply chain getting at the same time more digital and decentralized -digital solutions also provide secure tools to ensure trust and integrity of data – and especially food safety records, is key. Conventional cryptographic approaches are indeed secure at the present time but they are not future-proof as imminent progress in quantum computing can possibly crack them. To mitigate this new threat, the BESSC Framework presents the QSHA-512 as the basis of a secure product data supply chain.

6.1 Introduction to QSHA-512

QSHA-512 is a post-quantum cryptographic hash function (PHF) that resists cryptanalysis by classical and quantum adversaries. It produces a uniform but different output in 512-bit digest from any input, so that if virtually anything changes in the input (even a single character in a food safety record or a supply record), the hash value is entirely different. This requirement is essential in blockchain networks where hash functions are utilized to preserve data integrity and provenance. QSHA-512 is based on lattice-based and multivariate polynomial cryptographic schemes, which are currently known as the most prospective ones for post-quantum cryptography. That is, it's effectively unable to be reversed, or at least cannot be feasibly predicted—such as by quantum algorithms, like Grover's.

6.2 Differences from Classical Hashing (SHA-2, SHA-3)

Although SHA-2 (which includes SHA-256 and SHA-512) and SHA-3 are well-established algorithms that secure digital data, these algorithms assume that their security properties are 'hard' in the classical sense. These cryptographic hashes can be accelerated by a quantum computer – Grover's algorithm, for example can reduce the effective length of a 256-bit hash to 128 bits. This is in contrast with QSHA-512, which utilizes quantum noise and superposition patterns in its hash generating process, and is thus much more secure from these attacks. The characteristic of QSHA is fundamentally different from that of traditional hashes, which are generally constructed by using purely bitwise operations and modulo arithmetic while taking advantage of both quantum generated randomness and highly complex multidimensional vector transformation, thus reinforcing unpredictability and resistibility.

6.3 Advantages in Protecting Food Safety Records

At the BESSC level data on food safety can be captured along the complete chain from farm to cold storage and from cold storage to delivery. This data is authentic/tamper evident.⁴⁵⁶It is authentic data. QSHA-512 provides the authenticity, integrity and secrecy of the data. For instance, a dairy product can be scanned to form a hash of a product's metadata (e.g., time-stamp, temperature, GPS, handling status) using QSHA-512 in a processing plant, which is then stored on blockchain. If any data is tampered with (either intentionally or inadvertently) then the difference in the QSHA Hash will immediately indicate the discrepancy. Such level of security is very important for regulatory compliance in food and audit, strong traceability and fast, reliable and tamper-proof verification.

6.4 Application in Securing Blockchain Transactions

Each transaction in the BESSC blockchain—be it a temperature alert, product movement, smart contract execution, or donation via the Food Surplus Exchange (FSE)—is hashed and stored using QSHA-512. These hashes form the Merkle root of the blockchain blocks, ensuring that all data is cryptographically linked and immutable.

Moreover, QSHA is integrated into the smart contract lifecycle, ensuring that contracts cannot be altered post-deployment and that their triggers (like temperature threshold violations) are provably genuine. The use of QSHA-512 here guarantees that even if a malicious actor gains partial access to the network, they cannot forge or reverse-engineer previous transactions.

6.5 Resistance to Quantum Attacks and Future-Proofing

One of the biggest advantages of QSHA-512 lies in its resilience to quantum computing threats, which are expected to become practically viable in the coming decades. As quantum computers can theoretically break many classical public-key cryptosystems (e.g., RSA, ECC), QSHA is designed to future-proof the supply chain's security infrastructure. Its reliance on problems believed to be hard even for quantum algorithms places it at the forefront of next-generation secure supply chain technologies.

Incorporating QSHA-512 within the BESSC model provides assurance that the sensitive data stored (i.e., batch logs, safety, trade) is not only secure against future threats, but quantum future threats. This is the proactive approach that will strengthen trust from stakeholders, drive long term sustainability, and is consistent with the worldwide push for quantum-safe cryptography standards.”

7. DECENTRALIZED FOOD SURPLUS EXCHANGE (FSE)

The Blockchain-Enriched Sustainable Supply-Chain (BESSC) framework component, termed as the FSE, tackles one of the major problems related to food supplies, the poor redistribution problem. FSE serves as an equalitarian peer-to-peer (P2P) blockchain-driven app that links companies (i.e., supermarkets, farms, restaurants) with excess food to potential consumers, such as NGOs, food banks, and small merchants. The system aims to provide a fast, auditable and secure method of transacting with smart contracts so that surplus and surplus food is transferred rapidly to areas that require it without human-in-the-middle delays.

7.1 Matching Supply-Demand of Surplus Food

The core of the FSE is the Surplus Matching Algorithm, which ensures that food donations or surplus inventory are routed to the most suitable destinations. Mathematically, the matching logic is based on:

$$S_{ij} = \min(D_j, Q_i) \times \delta_{ij} \quad (9)$$

Where, S_{ij} : Matched supply from supplier i to demander j , Q_i is quantity of surplus food at the surplus food available at supplier i , D_j is the demand at location j , δ_{ij} is a feasibility factor.

This ensures **optimized redistribution** by minimizing food wastage and ensuring that critical needs are prioritized based on urgency and feasibility.

7.2 Benefits for NGOs, Food Banks, and Small Vendors

The decentralised processing of FSE has implications at the local level – it “creates the ability for local people, especially NGOs and food banks, to have access to the source of surplus without having to go through a middle man. This results in lower-operating costs, more access to nutritious foods, and contributes to local food equity. Small vendors and producers, whose sales are subject to market volatility, are able to recommit unsold merchandise at a moment's notice, thus mitigating losses and steadying their economic livelihoods.

The system's transparency also provides donors with certification for tax purposes and gives recipients the opportunity to trace supply sources, making the entire process more transparent and trustworthy.

7.3 Case Study Simulation: Urban Food Redistribution

Imagine there is a city in which a big supermarket chain has installed IoT sensors that mark out 500 kg of on-the-edge fruits and vegetables. The FSE system immediately records this supply and begins executing its matching algorithm. A NGO-manned community kitchen 3 km away is in the waitlist for 300 kg. The smart contract pairs the two and reserves a collection with a local registered transporter and records everything.

Once on the ground, the NGO stamps a mobile app to acknowledge the drop-off, the supplier earns carbon credits, and the transporter gets paid in tokenized currency. This free-flowing and transparent distribution of products, services and incentives, demonstrates how the FSE has the ability to actually mitigate food waste and improve food security on-the-fly.

8. SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALABILITY ANALYSIS

The BESSC framework is a comprehensive approach to transition traditional food-related supply networks into more sustainable, efficient, and inclusive system by making use of blockchain technology. With the combination of blockchain, DRL, IoT, and quantum cryptography, the environment, economy, and people are expected to gain significant benefits.

8.1 Environmental Benefits

Bootstrapped with a fundamentally reduced food waste process through an intelligent redistribution system, BESSC leverages real-time IoT input combined with predictive analytics of a DRL-based Food Waste Reduction Algorithm (FWRA). By channeling surplus to places where it is wanted before it can spoil, it helps reduce methane emissions from rotting waste in landfills. What is more, by planning routes and minimizing unnecessary shipments, your fleet is saving carbon footprints which ultimately makes for an energy-efficient transportation and better logistics.

8.2 Economic Analysis

From the perspective of the economy, BESSC contributes to the reduction of costs for producers, distributors and retailers. By avoiding spoilage of foods and accelerating surplus disposal, businesses can slash storage and inventory holding costs and waste disposal expenses. Smart contracts take over compliance and transaction processes, cutting admin costs. The decentralised model also offers a way of conserving resources as smaller vendors and local farmers can have a stake in a wider and more inclusive supply chain without needing to engage with intermediaries breaking the bank.

8.3 Social Impact

BESSC plays an important role in food security, transfer of surplus and addressing shortages following surplus disparity outside the centralized arrangement. It also means that NGOs and food banks have greater access to healthy food, improving public health and societal well-being. Through the transparent, verifiable blockchain records, regulatory confidence in the system is increased which has the potential to facilitate audits more smoothly, food recalls and safety certifications more quickly which in turn helps to rebuild public trust in the food supply.

8.4 Scalability for Urban vs. Rural Logistics

One of the great strengths of BESSC is its flexibility in being able to scale from small to large geographical units. In cities— where digital infrastructure is already robust – the system can be seamlessly incorporated in contemporary transportation and smart city solutions. In the countryside, mobile connectivity and light blockchain protocol clients offer an inclusive participation. The use of modular architectures makes local settings for different logistical decisions possible, which remains to be robust across scales.

8.5 Integration with Existing ERP or SCM Tools

For improved compatibility and acceptance, BESSC can be easily incorporated with existing ERP and SCM software. APIs and middleware link blockchain records with older-style databases, so stock levels, shipment status and demand forecasts are instantly synchronized. This hybrid interoperability enables incremental upgrades that don't disrupt ongoing operations as you adopt Call Control for Microsoft Teams.

9. COMPARATIVE EVALUATION

The efficacy of BESSC is best illustrated by comparing it with traditional supply chain models and other recent technological interventions.

9.1 Comparison with Traditional SCM Models

Conventional supply chains rely heavily on centralized control, paper-based records, and reactive decision-making. These models suffer from latency in information flow, lack of transparency, high wastage, and limited traceability. In contrast, BESSC introduces autonomous, data-driven decision-making, real-time traceability, and distributed consensus, offering superior visibility, trust, and responsiveness as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of BESSC vs Other SCM Models

Metric	Traditional SCM	IoT-enabled SCM	Blockchain-only SCM	AI-based SCM	BESSC (Proposed)
Transparency & Traceability (0–100)	30	60	85	70	95
Data Security (0–100)	25	50	85	60	98 (QSHA)
Food Spoilage Reduction (%)	10	40	50	65	85
Redistribution Efficiency (%)	20	45	50	70	90
Spoilage Prediction Accuracy (%)	50	70	75	85	92
Food Saved (%)	50	60	65	75	85
Smart Contract Utilization (0–100)	0	30	90	40	95
Transaction Latency (sec) (↓Better)	—	—	3.5	—	1.2
Throughput (TPS)	—	40	70	90	120
Sustainability Score (0–100)	30	60	65	70	90
Scalability (0–100)	40	60	70	80	95
ERP Integration Readiness (0–100)	30	50	70	65	90

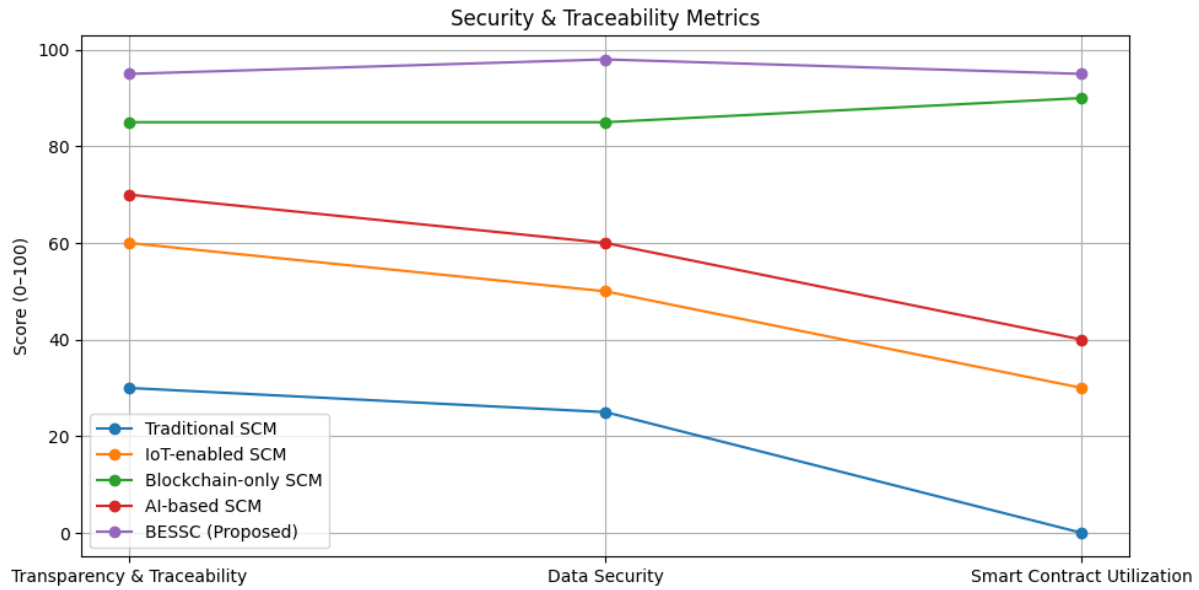


Figure 4: Comparison of Security and Traceability Metrics

Fig 4 compares how different supply chain models perform in terms of transparency, data security, and smart contract utilization. Traditional supply chain management (SCM) systems rank the lowest, with minimal transparency (30), poor data security (25), and no smart contract support (0). IoT-enabled SCM shows noticeable improvement, especially in transparency (60) and smart contract usage (30). Blockchain-only SCM leads in smart contract utilization (90) and scores high in both transparency and data security (85 each). AI-based SCM performs moderately across all parameters. The BESSC framework stands out with the highest scores—95 in transparency and smart contract use, and 98 in data security—thanks to its integration of blockchain and the Quantum Secure Hash Algorithm (QSHA), ensuring robust and tamper-proof data handling.

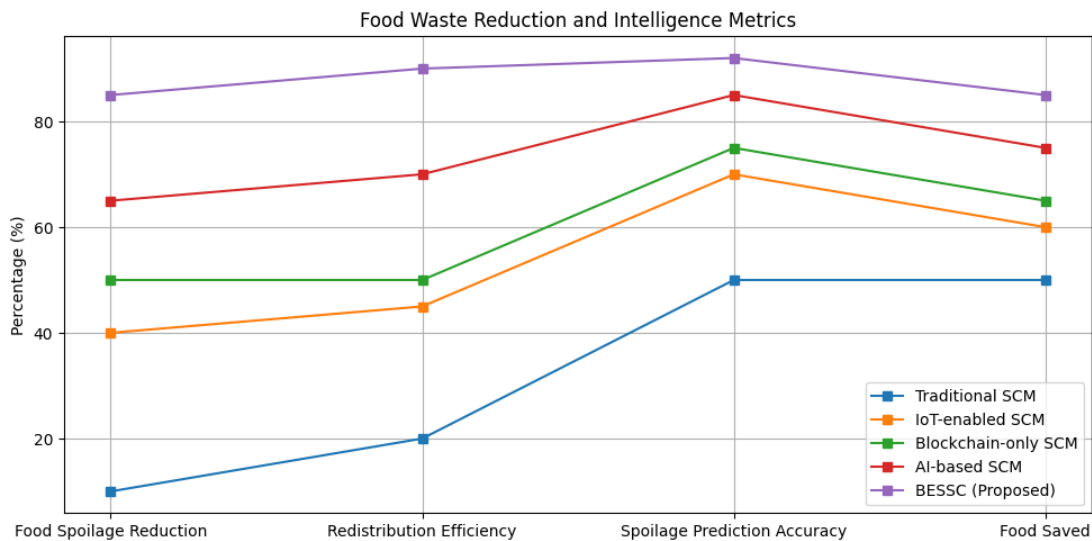


Figure 5: Comparison of Food Waste Reduction Metrics

Fig 5 illustrates the efficiency of each model in reducing food spoilage, improving redistribution, predicting spoilage accurately, and overall food saved. Traditional SCM lags significantly, with only 10% spoilage reduction and 20% redistribution efficiency. IoT-enabled SCM and Blockchain-only SCM show incremental improvements, while AI-based SCM delivers better performance—especially in spoilage prediction (85%) and food saved (75%). The BESSC framework achieves the highest across all categories, with an impressive 85% food spoilage reduction, 90% redistribution efficiency, 92% prediction accuracy, and 85%

of food saved. These improvements are attributed to the deep reinforcement learning (DRL) module, which dynamically optimizes the supply-demand balance in real time.

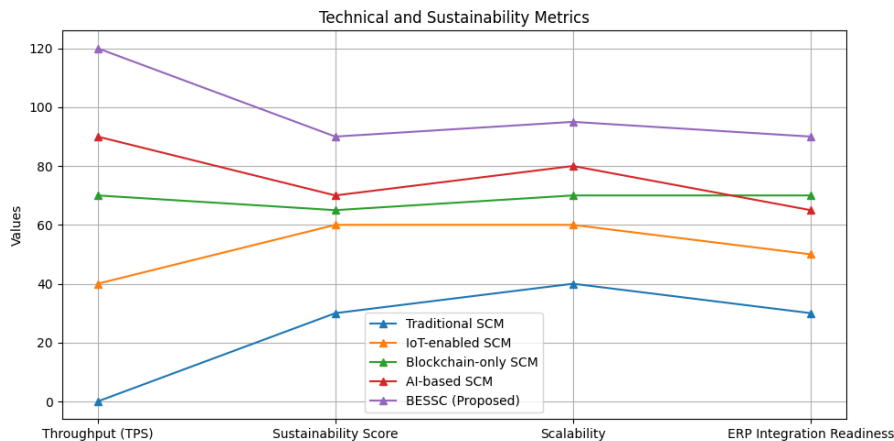


Figure 6: Comparison of Technical and Sustainability Metrics

Fig 6 focuses on throughput, sustainability, scalability, and ERP integration readiness. Traditional SCM performs the weakest, especially in throughput (0) and sustainability (30). IoT-enabled and blockchain-only models offer gradual enhancements, while AI-based SCM provides higher throughput (90 TPS) and scalability (80). The BESSC framework again leads, achieving 120 TPS throughput, 90 in sustainability, 95 in scalability, and 90 in ERP integration readiness. These scores demonstrate the framework's strong technical capability and its readiness for integration into modern enterprise systems, making it both a scalable and sustainable solution for future supply chains.

10. CONCLUSION

In summary, the BESSC model is a novelty framework for sustainable food supply chain that ushers in a new era for the new space decade by converging blockchain technology that ensures transparency and immutability, deep reinforcement learning that provides intelligent optimization, as well as quantum secure hashing which is fully secure in terms of cyber security. Utilizing its decentralized design, IoT based monitoring, and smart contract automation BESSC overcomes food loss, redistribution inefficiency, and data corruption. Although it still has challenges including technology restrictions, sensor calibration, scalability, energy-heavy consensus, and DRL's data dependence, but with the development of federated learning, swarm intelligence, and regulatory conformity, etc, it may obtain enhanced applications. In conclusion, BESSC is proposed to facilitate a global scalable, secure, intelligent food distribution system that not only reduces food waste, but also promotes fairness, efficiency, and resilience in next generation food ecosystems.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Not Applicable

Funding

No financial support was provided for the conduct of this research.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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