



Official Participant

Rapporteur Template for Scientific Events

Event Title :	Fight Food Waste, Feed The Planet	Date:	15/10/2015
Event Organiser:	European Commission – DG SANTE		
Event Target Group:	Actors from the whole food supply chain and related stakeholders (including food producers and processors, retailers, food banks, consumer and other NGOs, academia, public administrations, international organisations). Public event (also web-streamed).		
Rapporteur:	Paolo Canfora (JRC.J.5)		

1. Which research themes are concerned? (Tick all relevant areas)

- A: Improve public health through nutrition – healthy and sustainable consumption
- B: Increase food safety and quality
- C: Reduce losses and waste – more efficient food chain
- D: Manage the land for all ecosystem services – sustainable rural development
- E: Increase agricultural outputs sustainably – sustainable intensification
- F: Understand food markets in an increasingly globalised food system
- G: Increase equity in the food system

2. What is the challenge and why does it exist?

According to FAO, one third of the food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted. This is unacceptable from all social (hunger), environmental (env. impact of food production) and economic (lost economic value) points of view. At the global scale, according to FAO estimates, almost 1.4 billion hectares (more than China's total area) is used for producing food that is wasted and food waste is responsible for 7% of global GHG emissions (if food waste were a country, it would rank as the third highest national emitter after the USA and China). In the EU, it is estimated that there are currently 100 Mt of food waste annually. This is due to several reasons and across all stages of the food chain. Some of the key reasons mentioned during the conference are:

- Overproduction
- Problems with storage and transport
- Too strict quality and uniformity standards
- Problems with stock management in the supply chain
- Poor understanding of 'date marking' by consumers and other actors
- Insufficient shopping and meal planning
- Too large portion sizes

A very considerable share of food waste is from households (e.g. in Catalonia 58% of food waste, excluding wholesale trade and primary production).

The problem of food waste is now a known issue and there is a very broad and general agreement on the fact that we must act. There are also several on-going initiatives at different levels and by different actors, but there is a need for enhanced co-operation between actors in the food chain and more consistent policies (public and private sectors). An example that was brought up by one of the speakers is the strong imbalance between actions to educate consumers to waste less and consume healthier diets and advertisement (buy more, invite consumers to choose larger portions...). Another important challenge is the barriers to fully implement useful actions to reduce food waste (e.g. fiscal barriers to donation)

3. What will happen if the challenge is not addressed?

- Short Term Consequences
- Long Term Consequences

Short term: Food waste in the EU is forecasted to rise to over 120 million tonnes by 2020 under a business-as-usual scenario. This means an even increased negative social, economic and environmental impact.

Long term: Resource constraints mean that wasting food today is taking away resources for producing food in the future (especially energy and land). Failure to address the food waste challenge today would therefore have an important impact on future food security as well as climate change.

5. What were the suggested solutions, research insights and/or policy proposals? Were specific new research or development actions identified?

Addressing the challenge to reduce food waste – whilst ensuring food and feed safety- requires a broad range of actions to be implemented by different actors and enhanced intersectoral co-operation. The discussions at the event encompassed this broad range, also highlighting that the role of public administrations (both at international/national level but especially at local level) has changed from initiators (bringing up the problem) to facilitators (getting together the relevant actors to stimulate action, removing barriers, both regulatory and operational).

The main principles underpinning the suggested solutions are:

- Ensure a definitional framework of food waste to be applied consistently at each stage of the food supply chain: e.g. define food waste as removal of food from the food supply chain for recovery or disposal and food which has been left to spoil or expire as a result of negligence (FAO work, FUSIONS project).
- Collect data on / Monitor food waste at all levels in order to better understand the size of the problem, and, for specific actors, how much they are concerned, with careful attention to the different forms of food waste: e.g. surplus in agriculture, misshaped food in manufacturing, food too close to "best before" date removed at retail, etc. (e.g. FUSIONS project, NL yearly monitoring on food waste including also self-monitoring from companies, WRI Food Loss Waste Protocol Accounting and Reporting Standard).
- Harmonisation of measurement methodology (while remaining flexible enough to adapt to different types of products, stages in the food supply chain, etc.)
- Address and, wherever possible, lift barriers which may prevent safe use of unsold food in the food and feed chain. Facilitate food redistribution, i.e. donation of safe edible food to food banks and charities (The EC will produce guidelines at EU level that could help inform practices at national level – e.g. food close to "best before" date may be considered as having a value of zero or close to zero; in this way MS may consider that VAT is zero where the food genuinely has no value).
- Optimise use of former foodstuffs in feed (e.g. do not classify food which is safe as waste: if you do, it cannot be used in feed).
- Promote right portion sizing (in catering, food retail, households...)
- Include nudging/behavioural insight in policy making (public and private).
- Raise awareness and engagement, especially at the consumers level (e.g. UK Love Food Hate Waste campaign)
- Put in place mechanisms to address externalities (e.g. experience from UK or Spain shows that introducing or increasing landfill tax can incentivise reduction of food waste). Ensure that true costs are paid by those responsible. More broadly, ensure right price/costs of food.

A solution to a more specific issue that was also thoroughly discussed is:

- Promote better understanding and use of date marking on food ('best before' and 'use by'), also in light of recent EU-wide survey that showed that most people look at the dates but many of them do not understand 'best before' (with significant differences between MS and also taking into account socio-economic/demographic factors):
 - Better information of consumers (need for targeted campaigns)
 - Check business practices (e.g. similar products with different shelf-life)
 - Explore possible extensions of the list of food with no date at all, such as salt or vinegar (but are those the products actually wasted?)

For more concrete examples of actions to reduce food waste, see section 9 below on 'best practices'.

6. What are the expected benefits and risks of such initiatives?

The solutions discussed at the conference are likely to have a considerable impact in reducing food waste and the benefits from reducing food waste (without jeopardizing human or animal health) have the potential for much larger impact (e.g. social).

7. Does this event address research challenges others than those in the discussion document (http://europa.eu/expo2015/sites/default/files/files/FINAL_Expo-Discussion-paper_lowQ%281%29.pdf)?

The research challenges addressed by this event are described in the discussion document, under Theme C (Reduce losses and waste: more efficient food chain).

8. Did this event point out gaps in the private and public research infrastructure/systems which should be addressed?

The conference pointed out several times to the need for stronger cooperation among government(s), private industry and knowledge institutes/research.

9. What best practices were mentioned at this event?

Netherlands: Alliance on sustainable food (food to fork stakeholders), consumer awareness ("Why 50 kilo?" campaign, campaigns with retailers - such as measuring cup, how to store food in refrigerators), partnership on food donation (fiscal aspects: donating food helps retailers pay less taxes), food waste reduction in hospitals.

UK: Courtauld Commitment (signatories: 90% of grocery sales in UK); "Love Food Hate Waste" campaign (by WRAP with intermediate actors, e.g. retailers); 10 cities campaign (2 year campaign involving all actors within 10 local areas); fresher for longer initiative ('until lunch do us apart'); recipes on packaging helping make best use of the food; Courtauld Commitment on supply chain: actions on both prevention (manufacturing food waste reduction – example of pies manufacturer) and redistribution (for food waste that cannot be avoided); AD development. Results (voluntary action): 2007-2012 household food waste reduced by 15%; supply chain food waste reduced by 7.4%.

Hospital Food Service of Vastra Gotaland region (Sweden – 12000 meals/day): target of -50% food waste and -1M€/year; information campaign for all employees and action plan for kitchens; involving hospital management; check of menu/recipes (e.g. portions, change unsuccessful recipes, discussion group with all chefs, less options/choices in restaurants); choice by patients and smaller portions if they wish so; clearance sale the last 30 minutes in restaurants; cold meals as back-up to avoid over-ordering of meals by wards.

Catalonia region (Spain): food waste diagnosis and measurement; "Som Gent De Profit" ("we are food wise") campaign to citizens on buying, storing and cooking habits (travelling exhibition; TV shows; Apple and android app with portion calculator and recipes based on available ingredients; song and music videos); education activities (for schools) and capacity buildings (for food catering sector professionals); NGO Nutrition without Borders (redistribution from hotels and food companies to charities); Espigoladors (collection of discarded fruits and vegetables to produce jams by NGO sold as "I'm imperfect"); very nice guide "Think, buy, cook, eat"; thematic days under 6th European Week for Waste Reduction (LIFE project)

Consumer Goods Forum (global network including both retailers and manufacturers): commitment to reduce collectively food waste by 50% by 2025, using WRI protocol (not only in their operations but also upstream/downstream).

FAO and UNEP: SAVE FOOD initiative; UNEP Think Eat Save – Global Food Waste Prevention (global awareness campaign; UNEP+WRAP+FAO's Guidance on food waste prevention and reduction (May 2014); capacity building); UNEP Champions 12.3 (Enacting SDG 12.3 - halve food waste at consumers and retailers level; reduce food waste in production/processing, including post-harvest losses – by identifying champions).

Another minor but interesting best practice mentioned during the conference was the example of a buffet restaurant in Norway where they firstly implemented smaller plates (result: 20% less food waste), then also a sign 'you can come back' (other -20%).

10. What follow-up actions emerged from this event?

- Need to make **promotion and sharing of best practices** more effective and happening more. The Commission invited all stakeholders to provide information on best practices implemented across the EU on food waste prevention for the dedicated Commission website. Best practices should be **informed by an evidence base** (e.g. measurement of food waste over time).
- Need for a "**systems**" approach; focus on areas of biggest impact. Food waste reduction is not enough; need to **sustain behaviour**.
- Give a stage to **frontrunners**: recognise/praise those actors achieving the best results and developing best practices; use champions to promote these further.
- **Evaluation of real impacts** of food waste prevention activities according to a common reliable assessment methodology. (REFRESH project will evaluate best practices and create 5 national platforms where organisations can both "bring and get" best practices.)
- Strong focus on **raising awareness**. People think they do not waste food, but many do. And not only consumers, but also businesses. Many businesses see food waste as the cost of disposing waste, not the cost of buying/producing the food! Need also to **engage the young people**.
- Give the **right information** at the right moment to consumers: use new technologies and innovation, take into account the individual needs of consumers.
- Reconsider the value of **best before dates** on food with long shelf life (e.g. rice or coffee) and whether removal could contribute to food waste prevention.
- Improve **monitoring**. Need for better data on food wastage across the EU. Data are particularly lacking in the primary production and wholesale distribution sectors (e.g. this is Catalonia's objective for 2016 – only 3 EU countries have reliable data on food waste in these sectors). Need for a comprehensive monitoring (not necessarily monitoring waste, but monitoring where resources are going in the food supply chain). Importance of naming, e.g. unsold food at retailers that is still edible or food residues from a certain manufacturing process are not considered as "food waste" if they can be utilised in the food and feed chain, but these resource flows (redistribution, animal feed) still need to be monitored.
- Need for **stronger cooperation among stakeholders**, nationally and locally, but also internationally. A key aspect is building **trust** between stakeholders (based on facts and figures). Importance of having voluntary commitments of all actors; sharing knowledge; understanding the needs and points of view of all other stakeholders. Need for a vehicle to build trust, e.g. supply chain partnerships.
- Ensuring that the public and private policy include **externalities**. For instance, landfill taxes or costs linked to AD (administrative and fee gate for bio-energy) can help incentivise food redistribution to charities.
- Include food waste criteria in **GPP**.
- Pursuing discussions (e.g. with food manufacturers and retailers) about commercial practices, e.g. consider reducing portion sizes even if this means **selling less**.

A clear outcome that emerged from these follow up actions proposed at the conference is that we all have a role to play. And the EU can play a crucial role.