

Waste Not, Want Not

Reducing food waste in Europe

March 5th 2013 / Stanhope Hotel . Brussels



Debrief 5 March 2013

Programme

- 9:30 – 10:00** **Registration**
- 10:00 – 10:02 Introduction by moderator of debate: Jacki Davis
- 10:02 – 10:30** **Opening remarks**
- 10:02 – 10:10 Julian Hilton-Johnson, Vice-President Corporate Relations & Chief of Staff to the President, McDonald's Europe
- 10:12 – 10:20 Eric Poudelet, Director Food Chain Safety, DG Public Health and Consumers
- 10:22 – 10:30 Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Member of European Parliament (Sweden, EPP)
- 10:30 – 11:20** **Panel 1: "How can we prevent food waste?"**
- Else Krueck, Director Environment and Corporate Responsibility McDonald's Europe
 - Eric Poudelet, Director Food Chain Safety, DG Public Health and Consumers
 - Adela Torres Calatayud, Environment Manager, Mercadona, S.A.
 - Dr Richard Swannell, Director of Design & Waste Prevention, WRAP
 - Dr Sophie Hieke, Consumer Insights Manager, European Food Information Council
- 11:20 – 11:40** **Coffee break**
- 11:40 – 12:30** **Panel 2: "Putting waste to good use?"**
- Ben Caspar, Head of EU Ecolabel, DG Environment, European Commission
 - Philippe Thery, VP sourcing & manufacturing , McCain, Continental Europe
 - Olaf Fennis, Project Developer, Waste to Biobased, Attero
 - Richard China, Director, Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
 - Dr Jan Broeze, Senior Scientist, Sustainable Processing, Wageningen UR Food & Biobased Research and FUSIONS project
- 12:30 – 13:30** **Closing of conference and networking lunch**

Number of attendees: approx. 100

Summary – key points of debate

- **Preventing wastage and managing the unavoidable part of waste is of key importance to meet the resource efficiency objectives** of the European Union and the food demand of a forecasted global population of 9 billion people;
- All stakeholders accepted that the interests they represented had a role to play and expressed willingness to improve continuously;
- Whilst there are already important initiatives both at national and at the EU level, **it is important to join forces and cooperate** (e.g. the case of the existing partnership of McDonald's and its direct and indirect suppliers) instead of "working in silos". This is in line with the European Commission's approach to the Sustainable Food Communication due to be published end 2013, which aims to develop a holistic approach to food policy and will address food waste prominently;
- It is important to get a clear understanding of how to calculate actual figures and estimates on amount of food waste because **you can only manage what you can measure**;
- In developed countries, households waste the most hence it is important to make them aware of the issue and help them by, e.g. clarifying "best before" (quality indicator) and "use by" (safety indicator) dates and serving the right portions to meet everybody's needs rather than over-consumption;
- There are promising innovations that contribute to making use of every part of raw materials. However, these **innovations are often hindered by inconsistent legislation across Europe**, e.g. in the case of applying compost from organic residues on fields allowed in D but not in BE; in certain markets using recycled used-frying oil as biofuels is hindered by technical inconsistencies and unfavourable tax regimes;
- While minimising food waste is a global objective, the **solutions need to be tailored to each national circumstances** because cultural and infrastructural differences determine the acceptability and possibility of any one solution.

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Welcoming remarks



Julian Hilton Johnson, Vice-President Corporate Relations & Chief of Staff to the President McDonald's Europe welcomed the audience and introduced the company and its wider sustainability efforts. McDonald's has already achieved a lot and has a strong foundation to build on in the areas of Food, Nutrition & Well-Being, Sustainable Supply Chain, Environmental responsibility, People and Community. However, the company is committed to continuously improvement together with its suppliers and franchisees based on its "three-legged-stool" model. McDonald's is committed to source all of its food sustainably and aims to move "From doing less harm to doing more good". Finally, he explained how avoiding wastage was a core business interest for the company, which is built on efficiency.



Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Member of the European Parliament underlined the households are the biggest source of food waste. Hence raising awareness is extremely important by, for example, making people aware of the financial costs of wasting food and educating children in schools so that they reconnect with food. She acknowledged that a lot of actions had been taken already and mentioned that it was worth putting these forward so that stakeholders could learn from each other and also join forces. Among the solutions, she mentioned the use of doggy bags in restaurants, clarifying date labelling on food and setting the right temperature in refrigerators.



Eric Pondelet, Director, Safety of the food chain, DG Health and Consumers (DG SANCO), European Commission underlined that food waste is an economic, moral and ethical problem and addressing it is an important contribution to food security. The European Commission takes the food waste problem very seriously, but legislation is not seen as the answer. He said the role of the Commission should be to coordinate good practices and advise stakeholders using certain tools such as the DG Sanco Working Group on Food Waste. He mentioned that it was difficult to estimate the exact amounts of food waste because of a lack of common definition and statistical methodologies. The Commission-funded FUSION research project would bring solution to this challenge.

Panel 1: “How can we prevent food waste?”



alone will not solve the issue. Instead a holistic approach is needed with all stakeholders working together.

Sophie Hieke, Consumer Insights Manager, European Food Information Council, stressed that lack of awareness in the population is one of the main drivers of food waste as they do not even realize how much they waste and how that relates to sustainability. She also explained how cultural traditions, such as cooking more than needed influence the amount people waste. Ms Hieke found it important to emphasize that labelling



that resonates most with consumers. The message that it is good for the environment could be a secondary message but it will not work alone. He also mentioned that companies were increasingly competing on assisting consumers to waste less.

Richard Swanell, Director of Design & Waste Prevention, WRAP, agreed that awareness is a key issue, he pointed out that campaigns carried out by WRAP resulted in positive change. At the same time, he warned that because of cultural differences, there is no one-size fits all solution. While the overall objective is the same everywhere, the tools should be adapted to local circumstances. Mr Swanell, however, agreed that the most effective argument was the financial one



Calatayud mentioned the difficulties of donating food to food banks because of VAT issues. They also see great potential in working with suppliers and they feel that they have not reached full potential in those cooperations.

Adela Torres Calatayud, Environment Manager, Mercadona, S.A., claimed that wasting food was an economic issue for retailers because it represented a failure in their process. In her view food should not be treated as any other consumer good due to its specificities. She also explained that retailers made commitments within the Retail Forum to carry out three campaigns against food waste. In terms of barriers for further improvement, Ms



Else Krueck, Director, Environment & CSR, McDonald's Europe, explained that McDonald's restaurants waste around 0.6% of the food they sell. This low figure is e.g. due to the operational standards in restaurants, their system that helps them projecting demand and the standards that set requirements, guide and evaluate their direct and indirect suppliers. The constant dialogue with their suppliers helps sharing best

practices, however she cited regulatory barriers, which make it more difficult to apply certain solutions in new markets. The most obvious example is how using recycled shortening in biofuels is legislated differently in various countries. Ms Krueck believes that the biggest priority for McDonald's in the future is continuous improvement in the supply chain.



Eric Pondelet mentioned the importance of education. He gave the example of being raised after World War II, when he was taught that wasting food was completely irrational. He said Europeans should again understand this and get back into the habit of not wasting food. Mr Pondelet mentioned that food waste needed to be tackled in all parts of the food chain and initiating a public discussion on it was the most important priority.

Panel 2 “Putting waste to good use”



Benjamin Caspar, Coordinator of the EU Sustainable Food Communication at DG Environment in the European Commission, said that a long-term strategy was needed to coordinate actions and make them all work. Mr. Caspar pointed out three options that will most likely be in the forthcoming Commission Communication to address food waste: (1) Harmonising the interpretation of VAT rules for food donations, (2) changing the concept of

liability for food donations and (3) having a better system for collecting data in a systematic manner. He added that it would be important to have a discussion with MS to implement separate collection. However, he does not believe in a single solution, it has to be a combination of measures.



Philippe They (VP, Sourcing & Manufacturing, Continental Europe) said raising awareness was not only needed with consumers but also in the supply chain. All stakeholders should be aligned to follow the same goals. We should switch from transactional relationships to strategic relationships. He mentioned their existing practices to create value from raw materials, such as producing potato flakes for human consumption from cutting residues or using waste to

generate bioenergy. The question for them was how to create even more value and how to move new technologies from the laboratories to manufacturing. Mr They asked for more efficiency in agriculture mentioning that 1 out of 3 potatoes produced at farms did not get to the processors.



Richard China, Director, Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium at FAO, stressed that the key challenge in this discussion was to raise awareness of the problem globally. He argued that we need to produce enough food to feed a much bigger population in 2050. He is convinced that the key challenge is reducing losses very early in the supply chain. Huge savings can be made in the supply chain by saving early.



Jan Broeze, Senior Scientist, Sustainable Processing, Wageningen UR Food & Biobased Research and FUSIONS project, pointed out the need to generate new food ingredients that could create new food products. He cited the example of whey, which used to be seen as waste in dairy production, whereas now it is often the main product. He also sees solutions outside of the food chain, i.e. developing non-food products from the side streams and by-products of food production.

However, this requires innovation, not only in technology but in markets and supply chain management.



Olaf Fennis, Project Developer, Waste to Biobased, Attero ensured the audience that while their company uses waste to generate new products, they completely agreed with the need of reducing food waste. He sees his company as the missing link that brings back resources to the industry. They are continuously investing in new technologies, their latest experiments are producing plastics out of organic waste. He joined panel I in citing

regulatory barriers through the example of different legislation in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany for applying recycled compost on fields.

For additional information/material please visit www.food-waste.eu
