

Tackling Food Waste: the Consumer Cooperatives' Way

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About Euro Coop

- ✓ European Community of Consumer Co-operatives
- ✓ Members' figures (20 countries)
 - Turnover: €76 billion+
 - 450,000+ employees
 - 36,000+ points of sale
 - 4,500+ local and regional co-operatives
 - Consumer-members: > 30,000,000
 - Market leaders in IT, DK, FI and SK – among top 5 retailers in other countries



General objectives

- ✓ Representing the members to the EU
- ✓ Exchange of experiences and best practices
- ✓ Providing information on key policy issues



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Food waste: Framing the issue

- ✓ Economic, social, environmental and ethical concern
- ✓ Symptom of inefficiencies in sustainable consumption and production
- ✓ Must be tackled through a systemic approach comprising food supply chain, point of sale, consumer and post-consumer levels
- ✓ Importance of the international dimension → ethical paradox overnutrition / malnutrition



Food waste – Prevention & reduction as a consumer cooperative mission

- ✓ Food waste is a **challenge for the sustainability of our food system** and sustainability is a **founding value** of all co-operative enterprises → statutory bound to operate following the principles of economic, social and environmental sustainability
- ✓ Consumer co-operatives' **primary aim is to satisfy consumer – members' need and expectations**, not to maximise profits → able to look beyond classical production & consumption paradigm to the benefit of the whole society
- ✓ Unlike other private retailers, **education** and not only information to consumers is among their axes of action



Food waste – Stimulating innovation through policy (I)

What are the policy barriers to entrepreneurship and innovation around FW prevention?

- 1) Lack of looking at the issue in its full complexity → production, consumption and post-consumption axes
- 2) Lack of a common definition of and methodology to gather data on FW at EU level, cornerstone to create reliable and comparable statistics
- 3) Unclear in the EU VAT Directive for donated food close to "best before/use by" dates → Euro Coop deems there should be low/close to zero VAT for it
- 4) Confusion between "best before/use by"
- 5) Unclear about possible definitory/legislative overlaps with by-products
- 6) Absence of EU Food Donation Guidelines to help food donors/food redistribution organisations comply with EU Food Hygiene legislation

Food waste – Stimulating innovation through policy (II)

How can **policy** be used to **facilitate social innovation action**? At what **level** are policies in these areas **best able to facilitate social innovation?**

- 1) Promoting the need for **contract clauses on minimising food waste in GPP** – EU level
- 2) Identifying and scaling up **best-practices** – All levels
- 3) Stimulating **public/private partnerships** - All levels
- 4) Encouraging **voluntary agreements** from the business sector – All levels
- 5) Putting emphasis on **education** and **training**, both curricular and ongoing – MS level
- 6) Putting emphasis on need to **raise awareness** on the issue throughout the **supply chain** and at **general public level** -MS level
- 7) Fostering **R&D** – EU level

Food waste – Euro Coop action at EU level

- ✓ Member of the EU project for food waste prevention **EU FUSIONS**
- ✓ Launched the project “**EFFORTS**” - Euro Coop’s Forwarding Actions for the Reversal of Food Waste
- ✓ Signatory of the **Retail Agreement on Waste** in the context of the Retail Forum for Sustainability



Food Waste – Good examples from the members (I)

The Co-operative Group UK:

- ✓ Several initiatives to reduce food waste, a.o.: use of **computer-guided lasers to punch tomatoes plastic packages** → better control of moisture level, less food waste; first UK retailer to include in bags for food sold loose storage instructions; switched emphasis of promotional offers from volume-led deals ("buy one get one free") to value-driven promotions (half-price offers)



Coop Italy:

- ✓ **"Buon fine"** project → Donation of still edible, unsold food products to charities and people in need. In 2012, 5,115 tonnes of food for a value of 26,553,683 €
- ✓ **"S-cambia cibo"** → Funding of a start-up to recover domestic food surpluses. Food surpluses are put on www.scambiacibo.it with the possibility to join a picture. The food surplus appears geolocated in the map, available for anyone in need

Food waste – Good examples from the members (II)

Coop Denmark

- ✓ **“GoCook”** → app which teaches consumers recipes, storage indications and products specification
- ✓ **Single Bananas** → Bananas sold separately.
6,000 less bananas wasted everyday

Coop Norway

- ✓ **Single Bananas** + business-led project to **reduce the amount of edible food waste by 25 % before 2015**
- ✓ **Coop Environmental Award** → **“Drop Packaging”** for innovation in sealing of cold cuts; packaging **“The Line”** to inform consumer on the scale of FW



Food waste – Good examples from the members (II)

S Group Finland

- ✓ Since 2007 **price reduction practices harmonisation** so that all products approaching the “best before” date are sold at a discount

Eroski – Basque country, Spain

- ✓ Since 1996 « **Operación Kilo** » → 238,000 Kg of edible food donated only in 2012

Hispacoop - Spain

- ✓ **20 free fora** in different Spanish cities “ **Food Waste: a Responsibility for Everybody**” for general public and particularly vulnerable consumers

Coop Sweden

- ✓ **Competition** between professional chefs **on leftovers**



Thank you for your attention!

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