



SUMMARY REPORT

EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE (FLW)

SUB-GROUP ON ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

WebEx Meetings

27 October 2021 – From 14:00 to 17:30

Chair: DG SANTE

Commission: DG SANTE; DG RTD; JRC

Agencies: European Environmental Agency.

Member States represented (9)

DE, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, PT, SE.

Private Organisations represented (9)

COGECA – European Agri-Cooperatives, EUROCOMMERCE - the retail, wholesale and international trade representation to the EU, FEBA – European Food Banks Federation, FoodDrinkEurope, FoodWIN (Food Waste Innovation Network), HOTREC – Hospitality Europe, Nofima and Matvett Consortium, WAGENINGEN UR – Wageningen University & Research, Zero Waste Scotland

Public Entities

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), CoR – Committee of Regions.

Invited speakers:

Christina Gravert, Impactually DK

The meeting of the [Action and Implementation sub-group](#), established under the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste \(FLW\)](#), took place virtually via WebEx Meetings on 27 October 2021 from 14:00 to 17:30 CET.

1. Latest developments from Sweden: Nudging consumers in supermarkets to reduce food waste at home [\[PDF\]](#)

The Swedish Food Agency commissioned a study carried out by the *Rambøll Management Consulting* and *Impactually* to understand what type of in-store nudges can help consumers reduce food waste at home. As part of the study, the team collaborated with eight supermarkets across Sweden, which were asked to display offers on selected products by using different price advertising.

Findings show that the sales of those offers designed to help consumers take rational decisions when shopping decreased as compared to the basic multi-price offer. Furthermore, the results revealed that a simple discount per food item (not multi-price) led to a reduction in food not eaten. The results also showed that making the price comparison message more salient increased the sales of ecological products by 27% and that consumers who said that they often throw out food were more likely to have discarded the products.

In conclusion, multi-buy offers can nudge consumers to buy more than they need and interventions that get consumers to wait and think before buying can help reduce household food waste. Moreover, simply informing consumers and encouraging them to reduce food waste is not enough to change their behaviour.

FoodWIN inquired as to how the supermarkets reacted to the results of the study and whether they were considering changing the multi-buy promotions system. The speaker explained that supermarkets welcomed the results of the study, and some of the bigger retailers expressed interest particularly in the effect of the price tag giving salience to the savings from buying multiple items.

FAO took the floor to ask about a possible approach to change the attitude of families and individuals when grocery shopping. The speaker pointed out the importance of educating consumers and referred to the need to change the food environment in order to help consumers make decisions in line with their needs.

2. Latest developments from Sweden: National methods to measure food losses, Swedish Board of Agriculture [\[PDF\]](#)

A representative of the Swedish Board of Agriculture shared information about work carried out to increase knowledge and data on food losses. The speaker emphasised the importance of understanding the reasons why food is wasted or lost. The project gathered researchers with experience in food losses as well as key public authorities who focussed on the eight most important commodities as regards their value, volume, impact on climate change etc. The researchers suggested measurement methods for these commodities and engaged in a co-creative dialogue with farmers and industry organisations to find out more about their views on food losses. The report will be ready in 2022.

The Commission took the floor to ask about the farmers' reaction. The representative from the Swedish Board of Agriculture explained that the reaction of farmers was positive and a reference group was established for each food commodity. The speaker also mentioned that research is more complicated for crops such as wheat, which can be originally grown for human consumption but end up being used for animal feed.

3. Update on EU food loss and waste prevention work, European Commission [\[PDF\]](#)

The Commission presented an update on the actions foreseen in the Farm to Fork Strategy (including legislative proposals to set EU-level targets for food waste reduction by 2023 and to revise EU rules on date marking by the end of 2022). Among other on-going or planned projects presented were the [European Consumer Food Waste Forum](#), EU grants to support food loss and waste prevention actions for Member States and stakeholders, and the recently launched [EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub](#).

Croatia asked for further information about the stakeholders' grants, suggesting that these should also cover food redistribution activities carried out by food banks, and inquired about the scope for Member States' grants. The Commission reiterated that grants for Member States are intended solely to improve food waste measurement and the data collection process. On stakeholder grants, the Commission noted the remark about including food banks as possible beneficiaries of such grants, but expressed a preference for supporting the development of new ways of working rather than financing day-to-day operations.

FoodDrinkEurope inquired about the timeline of the study on food losses at production level. The Commission explained that the scope for such research has been included under [Horizon Europe call](#) 'Research and innovation for food losses and waste prevention and reduction through harmonised measurement and monitoring', published on 28/10/2021 and open until 15/02/2022.

4. Food loss and waste prevention in the food supply chain: key actions to date, including implementation of the Platform's key recommendations for action

The Commission gave the floor to the six members that helped shape the Platform's key recommendations for action in food waste prevention (2019), to provide a state-of-play on the actions undertaken to prevent/reduce food loss and waste for their respective stages of the food supply chain. Rapporteurs were also asked to consider the role of the Platform recommendations and the degree to which the members have implemented these. Last, but not least, rapporteurs were asked to provide a future outlook on the needs and opportunities related to prevention/reduction of food loss and waste in their sectors, possible tools to achieve these objectives and how the Platform can further support such actions in its new mandate.

COPA COGECA [\[PDF\]](#) representing the primary production sector, offered examples of how farmers and agricultural cooperatives reduce food waste, including shortening the food chain, re-purposing by-products, investment and collaboration in food waste diagnosis, optimisation of food processing, food donation and re-purposing of food surplus. According to **COPA COGECA**, farmers now see food waste not only as an opportunity, but also as a responsibility. Challenges to the sector include food losses due to climate change and new pests, issues linked to unfair trading practices and capacity building for food waste measurement, among others. The speaker highlighted that the Platform was an excellent tool to raise awareness, find new ideas and partnerships for food waste projects and identified several objectives for the new Platform (i.e. to focus on inter-relations between stages of the food supply chain; on the impacts of food safety and environmental requirements; on collecting harmonised information on food losses and waste).

The Commission pointed out that in the new Platform, members will have the possibility to co-chair sub-group meetings and propose topics for discussion (for instance, unfair trading practices and linkages between food supply chains can be tackled in the context of such meetings). Food safety issues will remain an important topic in the Platform's agenda, and the Commission will continue to involve colleagues from relevant services in this work. The Hub could be further developed to collect data on food losses in a coherent manner.

FoodDrinkEurope [[PDF](#)], representing the food manufacturing sector, highlighted that, in general, the sector is more aware of the issue of food loss and waste since the establishment of UN SDG Target 12.3 and is often involved in multi-stakeholder initiatives. The speaker also emphasised some challenges faced by food manufacturers, such as reduced capacity for SMEs to implement food waste prevention strategies in their operations, the issue of reducing packaging without increasing food waste etc. In terms of future actions, **FoodDrinkEurope** suggested the development of guidelines on how to measure and report on food waste (with a focus on SMEs) and awareness raising campaigns among consumers and food businesses alike as well as the need to strengthen the link between food waste and climate change.

The Commission explained that the development of sector specific guidelines can be done within the Platform, with work being led by interested members in the context of sub-group meetings. Concerning awareness campaigns, the Commission referred to the [European Consumer Food Waste Forum](#), which will issue research- and evidence-based recommendations and develop tools to help reduce consumer food waste. **FoodDrinkEurope** added that the Platform's key recommendations for action could be further disseminated to stakeholders. The connection between food waste and climate change will be further explored in the new Platform.

EuroCommerce took the floor to present highlights from the retail and wholesale sectors. [[PDF](#)] The speaker highlighted the efforts of the sector, amongst which voluntary commitments to reduce food waste, actions to forecast consumer demand and to adjust orders from suppliers, to discount products towards the end of their shelf-life etc. **EuroCommerce** called for more consumer awareness campaigns, further fiscal incentives for food donation and advised that the new Platform should further discuss scalable food waste prevention solutions and financing opportunities, especially for SMEs.

The Commission referred to the Platform recommendation to 'develop and use a wider range of methods to better understand consumer behaviour as regards food waste', highlighting that key messages for awareness campaigns should take into account the different motivations of consumers to prevent food waste e.g. saving money, environmental concerns etc. The Commission explained that fiscal incentives are the responsibility of Member States; moreover, the EU food donation guidelines promote a common interpretation by national regulatory authorities of EU rules applying to the redistribution of surplus food. As for the new Platform, innovative solutions against food waste will be shared within the Action & Implementation sub-group meetings. The Commission also encouraged members to share any examples or solutions on the [Hub](#).

HOTREC presented an update from the food services and hospitality sector, where a growing number of food businesses have taken action to curb food waste in their operations, despite challenges linked to the pandemic (e.g. closures, strict health rules etc.) **HOTREC** developed guidelines to reduce food waste and to facilitate food donations and their members take part in public-private partnerships to prevent food waste. Challenges for the sector include limited capacity for SMEs to measure their food waste, donating small batches of perishable food etc. **HOTREC** highlighted the important role of the Platform in best practice exchange and the need for funding to support micro-enterprises and SMEs in taking action against food waste.

The Commission confirmed that the new Platform will continue to facilitate knowledge exchange and explained that members can propose and lead the creation of specific deliverables (e.g. sectoral food waste measurement guidance) as part of the Platform's work.

Zero Waste Scotland [\[PDF\]](#) took the floor to report on the progress made on implementing the Platform's recommendations for citizens/consumers, noting that more and more countries are taking initiatives to change the behaviour of consumers (e.g. through education and training programmes etc.), and choice of methods for understanding behaviour change and designing effective solutions (e.g. through surveys, research etc.). The speaker pointed out that the biggest challenges are monitoring and measuring demonstrated behaviour change and the high cost of monitoring household food waste. **Zero Waste Scotland** explained that there has been significant progress in reducing consumer food waste in many countries across Europe and that the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that citizens have the ability to change their behaviour and reduce food waste.

The Commission pointed out that the new Platform will have a dedicated subgroup for consumer food waste. This subgroup will be closely associated with the on-going project [European Consumer Food Waste Forum](#), where researchers and practitioners work together to find solutions and develop tools to help reduce consumer food waste.

The **European Food Banks Federation (FEBA)** [\[PDF\]](#) took the floor to speak about food redistribution. The speaker emphasised that the general environment has changed considerably both in terms of legislative framework and the awareness and attitudes of all the actors of the food supply chain, public administrations, civil society organisations and consumers (e.g. the quantity of food redistributed increased by 70% over 5 years). Members of FEBA have developed innovative activities such as, for example, recovering surplus food from HORECA/catering facilities and cruise ships. The speaker reiterated that food donation can contribute to food waste reduction and highlighted that Member States which promote food redistribution through legislation and guidelines have achieved greater impacts.

5. EU funding for food waste prevention actions under Horizon Europe, European Commission [\[PDF\]](#)

The Commission provided an overview of the EU R&I policy context and focussed on funding opportunities for food waste prevention initiatives under Horizon Europe (both closed and on-going).

The Commission also presented the Food Systems Partnerships, a key implementation tool of Horizon Europe, bringing together the European Commission, public authorities and private actors to co-invest in solutions in four different thematic areas of research and innovation:

- Change the way we eat
- Change the way we provide food
- Change the way we connect citizens to food
- Change the way we govern the food system.

The Food Systems Partnership is planned to be launched in 2023, and interested Platform members were invited to consult the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) Food Systems Strategic Working Group webpage for [further information](#), and, if needed, to take contact with the team coordinating the Food Systems Partnership via the following functional mailbox: RTD-FOOD-SYSTEMS-PARTNERSHIP@ec.europa.eu.

Finally, the Commission referred to another implementation tool under Horizon Europe as being that of missions (the [implementation plan](#) was published in September 2021) and highlighted that the 'Soil Deal for Europe' mission could be relevant for Platform members.