



SUMMARY REPORT

EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE SUB-GROUP ON ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

Microsoft Teams

25 May 2023 – From 9:30 to 16:00

Co-Chairs: Anne-Laure Gassin, DG SANTE; Anton van den Brink, EFFPA; Hilke Bos Brouwers, WUR

Commission: DG SANTE (E1, Farm to Fork Strategy; G2, Animal Health; G5, Food Hygiene, Feed and Fraud)

Member States represented (8): CZ, EE, IE, ES, IT, LV, HU, PT

Private sector organisations (16): BOROUME, Consorzio Bestack, Copa-Cogeca, FUNDACIÓN AZTI – AZTI Foundation, EFFPA - European Former Foodstuff Processors Association, FEFAC – The European Feed Manufacturers' Federation, EuroCommerce, Euro Coop – European Community of Consumer Co-operatives, FEBA – European Food Banks Federation, Fruta Feia, HAROKOPIO University, HFBA – Hungarian Food Bank Association, HOTREC – Hospitality Europe, REGAL Normandie, RISE RESEARCH INSTITUTES OF SWEDEN AB, WUR – Wageningen University & Research

Public entities (1): FAO, European Committee of the Regions

Observers: NO

Invited: Unilever

1. Welcome and adoption of the agenda

The SANTE co-chair opened the meeting by introducing the co-chairs from EFFPA and WUR and presenting the main points on the agenda focusing on valorisation of former foodstuffs/by-products as feed and other high value products.

2. Preparation of a Platform report on Voluntary Agreements (VAs): state-of-play by the Commission and discussion with members ([PDF](#))

The **Commission** gave an overview of the progress made on the preparation of a Platform report aiming to capture key learnings from members' implementation of Voluntary Agreements to reduce food waste. Following a first round of feedback, the Commission will follow up bilaterally with some of the contributors to clarify some issues and prepare a second draft of the report. The report will be sent for validation to Platform members prior to its adoption, which is foreseen at the upcoming plenary meeting.

WUR highlighted the importance of presenting a consistent overview of the situation as regards implementation of voluntary agreements across Member States. The **Commission** explained that not all Member States had reported on their voluntary agreements and that follow up will be done bilaterally. The aim is to ensure the report is as complete as possible.

3. Valorisation of former foodstuffs/by-products as feed and other high value products

The EFFPA co-chair introduced the next agenda point.

3.1 Update by the Commission on EU legislation on feed safety and opportunities for use of former foodstuffs and by-products from food production, presentation by the Commission ([PDF](#))

The **Commission** presented an overview of the current situation as regards EU legislation related to the use of former foodstuffs and by-products from food production as feed. The Commission explained that any changes to the current regulatory framework need to be preceded by risk assessment by the European Food Safety Authority in order to ensure safety of the food supply chain, which cannot be compromised. In 2018 the Commission adopted guidelines to facilitate the safe use as feed of food no longer intended for human consumption ([C/2018/2035](#)) (for former foodstuffs of both animal and non-animal origin). The Commission presented progress made since the adoption of Regulation 999/2001 (regarding the management of risks related to Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs)), in particular, the authorisations adopted regarding the use of certain processed animal proteins (PAP) in feed. These include: the re-authorisation of porcine and avian PAP in fish feed in 2013; the authorisation of insect PAP in fish feed in 2017; and a set of authorisations in 2021 (allowing use of PAP derived from pigs and insects in poultry feed, PAP derived from poultry and insects in pig feed, and use of gelatine and collagen of ruminant origin in feed of non-ruminant farmed animals). The Commission also provided an overview of the prohibitions and restrictions for feed use, notably related to animal by-products (ABP) and possible presence of packaging residues, and provided an overview of relevant EU legislation in force concerning the use of former foodstuffs, including animal by-products.

EFFPA asked if the EU guidelines adopted in 2018 would be updated following the revision of the Waste Framework Directive and highlighted the importance of facilitating good practice

exchanges between Member States by the Commission. The **Commission** replied that an update of the guidelines was not currently foreseen in its work programme.

3.2 Introduction to former foodstuff processing, presentation by EFFPA ([PDF](#))

Following an [introductory video](#) about their activities, **EFFPA** referred to applicable EU legislation for the safe use of feed, covering safety and traceability, feed labelling, feed hygiene and the use of former foodstuffs. EFFPA elaborated on the food use hierarchy and offered examples of former foodstuffs and processes to transform them into animal feed, highlighting the nutritional benefits of the final products. EFFPA also presented the EU-funded LIFE F3 project demonstrating innovative technologies to process complex streams of former foodstuffs into high quality feed and its results. In closing, EFFPA announced their upcoming [webinar](#) (6 June 2023) on the role of food manufacturers and retailers in processing former foodstuffs to support a circular economy.

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia commented that the food use hierarchy should employ different colours for the actions to prevent and reduce food waste, in order to better distinguish between the redistribution of food for human consumption (which should be the preferred destination for surplus food) and its possible use for animal feed. FAO also questioned whether animals have the capacity to find feed made from former foodstuffs ‘appetising’, as suggested in EFFPA’s video. **EFFPA** further explained that animals could sense the taste of feed and eat it more readily. EFFPA also highlighted that a product meant to become feed can no longer be destined for human consumption and enumerated the positive environmental impacts of using former foodstuffs for feed. EFFPA referred to the importance of raising awareness about the food use hierarchy and explained it had collaborated with food banks to collect certain foods that were no longer suitable for human consumption in order to avoid food waste. Concerning the food use hierarchy, the **Commission** explained that the colour coding distinguishes between food waste prevention and treatment, with an aim to prevent surplus food from arising in the first place, and if/where it occurs, to redistribute such food, as a priority, for human consumption.

REGAL Normandie emphasised that an economic model where former foodstuffs are transformed into animal feed should not impede food waste prevention and redistribution for human consumption, which come first in the hierarchy of actions.

3.3 The Zonvarken farm: a case study, by August Offenbergh ([PDF](#))

The speaker presented the Zonvarken initiative, a Dutch farm where pigs are fed with feed prepared with former foodstuffs. The speaker also highlighted other sustainable measures adopted by the farm in the areas of energy efficiency, animal welfare etc.

EFFPA inquired about challenges to the circular feed model promoted by Zonvarken. The speaker pointed to the high level of salt content of former foodstuffs as well as the presence of additives, which does not allow an animal nutrition based exclusively on former foodstuffs. EFFPA also asked about the interest of Zonvarken farm collaborators in sustainable feed practices. The speaker pointed out to their collaboration between supermarkets and their bread distributors to recover surplus bread as well as interest in circular feed expressed by multi-national companies that usually send their surplus for energy production.

3.4 Key aspects for the transformation of former foodstuffs into animal feed or high value products, by David San Martin, AZTI ([PDF](#))

AZTI presented key aspects to be considered in developing solutions for transforming former foodstuffs into animal feed. AZTI shared different examples of circular models for the valorisation of side-streams from the food industry tested in EU-funded projects, such as the management and comprehensive use of whey generated by the cheese industry, innovative strategies for the recovery of aquaculture waste, among others.

When asked to share the key challenges related to the implementation of these initiatives, AZTI highlighted the need to collaborate with a variety of partners across the food supply chain to ensure compliance with legislation and the market demand for the new products. Concerning the location of the projects, AZTI replied that most case studies focussed on Spain, but there was also cooperation with Greece and Turkey and processes were being developed for the application of solutions across all EU countries.

3.5 The Circular Feed Cluster, by Toine Timmermans, the Food Waste Free Foundation (FWFF) Netherlands ([PDF](#))

Following an introduction on the structure and the work of the FWFF, the speaker presented the Circular Feed Cluster initiative, which accelerates and scales up solutions that transform food side streams into animal feed. FWFF highlighted the importance of the food use hierarchy and circular supply chains and shared examples of circular initiatives that embedded food waste prevention in their operations. FWFF emphasised the issue of competition between feed and biofuel, where bio-products that could be converted into feed and other food products are used to produce energy instead.

The EFFPA co-chair inquired whether the circular feed solutions presented are implemented also outside the Netherlands. FWFF explained that there is a growing interest in such initiatives across Europe, which are also attractive due to their positive impacts on animal welfare, sustainable food production and food waste reduction. FWFF highlighted the need to respect the food use hierarchy, with prevention of surplus food as a first measure. FWFF also emphasised the importance of collaboration and creating the right ecosystem (network of stakeholders, policy framework) to facilitate the implementation of circular feed solutions.

EFFPA asked about ways to further incentivise the implementation of circular feed and food solutions based on data. FWFF highlighted the importance of communication and standardisation of measurements of food-related emissions across the food supply chain, adopting a life cycle approach to better understand the impacts of foods and food waste. FWFF explained that the key actors to take action against food waste and adopt sustainable practices are manufacturers and retailers (who would need to work with their suppliers and further reduce food waste within operations across the food value chain) as well as consumers, given that most food waste occurs at the levels of food production and consumption. FWFF emphasised the need for companies to become more climate neutral and for consumers to make sustainable food choices.

SE suggested that the food use hierarchy should better highlight the resource efficiency aspects related to choosing one action over another and explained that financial considerations can compete with sustainability. The **Commission** explained that primary producers make decisions concerning the destination of their produce (for food, feed or energy) depending on market conditions and highlighted the responsibility of Member States to avoid market distortions through subsidies that may contravene the waste/food hierarchy. **EFFPA** are involved in an initiative to create an EU biomass factsheet that will provide further transparency on the use of former foodstuffs to produce biofuels (vs other biomass streams), indicating that the EU definitions of ‘waste’, ‘residues’ are often interpreted differently across Member States with implications for the use of biomass. **FWFF** referred to market trends and policy frameworks that shape companies’ decisions concerning the use of their surplus food or side streams (as animal feed or for energy production). As companies make these decisions based on financial considerations, it is important for policymakers to create the right framework that prioritises actions according to the food use hierarchy. The **Commission** highlighted that setting EU food waste reduction targets for the manufacturing and processing sector could help further incentivise food waste reduction measures over waste treatment. **NL** explained that it is difficult to create the perfect policy environment where there is no competition between food, feed and fuel, as raw materials are limited. **FWFF** suggested that life cycle analysis is a good way to determine which destination is most sustainable for biomass use. The **Commission** referred to the obligations of Member States to ensure the application of the waste hierarchy, as laid down in the revised Waste Framework Directive, which gives further leverage for action.

3.6 Research on side flows for animal feed, by Hilke Bos-Brouwers, Wageningen University and Research (WUR) ([PDF](#))

WUR presented three recent research projects on the use of side streams for animal feed, considering aspects related to safety, sustainability and consumer acceptance. The speaker explained that the volume of side flows was small compared to the total market for animal feed and that the production costs of eco-feed were primarily driven by processing costs. **WUR** has planned work to carry out a mapping of issues and considerations concerning possible legislative changes to remove barriers in valorising side flows as animal feed, across Europe.

The Commission requested further details on the mapping exercise, in particular the timeframe. **WUR** replied that the 2-year project would include interviews with stakeholders and workshops throughout 2023-2024 and welcomed Platform members that are interested to take part in the interviews.

3.7 LIFE ‘Food for Feed’ project: an innovative process for transforming hotel's food waste into animal feed, by Katia Lasaridi, Harokopio University ([PDF](#))

Harokopio University presented the results the EU-funded LIFE-F4F project, which examined an innovative low-emission technology for the safe transformation of catering waste from the hospitality sector, into animal feed.

EFFPA asked about the feasibility of transforming catering waste for use in animal feed, due to food safety concerns. **WUR** noted that the EU has stricter rules regarding feed safety compared to, for example, the USA, where it is possible to use catering and retail waste to produce animal feed. **Harokopio University** explained that more scientific evidence is needed to analyse the

different waste streams that could potentially be safely transformed into feed, an area where recent advances have been made in the EU for the feed use of insects. Harokopio University's feasibility analysis indicated the economic potential for such a feed solution. The speakers also noted that the use of bio-dried food waste was feasible and, according to their research, posed no major risk. **The Commission** highlighted that whilst research can point to new innovative solutions, any changes in legislation need to be supported by scientific risk assessment.

WUR asked whether any other ingredients were mixed into the feed, in addition to the catering waste. **Harokopio University** replied that the feed from catering waste was added to the usual feed, in varying percentages (between 5% to 15% of the total feed) and the nutritional balance of the feed was adjusted according to the composition of the catering waste in order to provide a balanced diet for the animals.

3.8 From mackerel rest raw materials to taste and smell free protein powder, by Mari Øvrum Gaarder, The Norwegian Institute of Food, Fisheries and Aquaculture Research (NOFIMA) ([PDF](#))

The aim of the project "Taste-neutral proteins from mackerel" (SMELL) was to develop a process for producing an odour and taste-neutral protein product from mackerel rest raw materials.

WUR asked about potential challenges in relation to upscaling this technological solution. **NOFIMA** replied that the technological challenges observed when upscaling the solution to an industrial level were being studied in a follow-up project. **NOFIMA** confirmed that interest of the industry in such solutions is quite high as fish side streams are a rich source of protein and this type of solutions would ensure the circularity of food.

3.9 Zero products to waste, by Tjebbe Keijzer, Unilever ([PDF](#))

Unilever presented the company's commitments to reduce food waste, actions taken within its operations, including tools to track and report on food waste, as well as the results achieved. **Unilever** also implemented actions to support households in reducing food waste.

WUR asked about how Unilever collaborates with suppliers (primary producers) and other supplying parties downstream, in order to reduce food waste. **Unilever** explained that the company adopted good management practices for ingredient stocks and is trying to simplify its portfolio by using the same ingredients for several different products.

Regal Normandie asked whether Unilever also collaborates with French companies in their Food Waste Warriors project. **Unilever** replied that they have identified Food Waste Warrior companies in every country, and they plan to consult them on actions to reduce food waste. The project would begin in June 2023. **Unilever** explained that the starting point for any company is to consider the supply and demand for their products and encouraged Platform members to reach out for any potential collaboration in reducing food waste.

4. Updates from Norway on food waste prevention initiatives, by Per Hallvard Eliassen, Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food ([PDF](#))

Norway updated members about a new committee on food waste set up by several public authorities (the Ministry of Climate and the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food) to assess actions and measures in order to meet the target to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030, including the feasibility of a food waste law. Norway also reported that, following the Norwegian industry agreement to reduce food waste, the total food waste had been reduced by 10% since 2015. Norway has also suggested a joint Nordic proposal to the Commission calling for the EU food waste reduction targets to be based only on the edible fraction of food that is wasted.

HOTREC inquired about the challenges faced by food business operators when measuring only the edible part of food waste. **Norsus** explained that such challenges were mainly faced by primary producers and restaurants and food services. Food compositional analysis was carried out to measure the edible and non-edible food waste for those establishments that could not separate the two fractions. At household level, several waste composition analyses were conducted, with similar results across different municipalities.

The Commission noted that discussions on quantifying edible food waste were carried out in the context of the EU-funded FUSIONS project (2012-2016), but this idea was abandoned due to the feasibility of carrying out such measurements. FUSIONS provided the first EU estimates of food waste amounts (total food waste) in 2016. Changing the focus to edible food waste would require a revision of food waste measurement legislation, which would delay the establishment of the future EU food waste reduction targets and progress made by the EU in this area. The Commission acknowledged that while the current measurement methodology may not be perfect, it would ensure a good baseline against which EU progress in food waste reduction could be measured. **Norway** suggested that measurement technologies had evolved in the past ten years and inquired about the possibility of setting voluntary targets on the edible fraction of food waste. Norway also proposed using coefficients to estimate the edible fraction of food waste from the total food waste reported by countries. **The Commission** replied that the development of such a coefficient would take a few years in order to agree with Member States and stakeholders on a common approach.

5. Conclusions and wrap-up

The Commission co-chair thanked all members for the fruitful discussions held during the meeting. On the implementation of the waste and the food use hierarchy, the Commission encouraged Member States to share their experiences as to how they implement these principles, including challenges met. The co-chair also expressed support for WUR's mapping exercise of the current environment and possible barriers for the use of food resources in feed, a project to which Platform members could contribute to. On the possible competition between different uses for biomass (e.g. feed vs fuel), the co-chair encouraged Member States to share information on their policy frameworks and practices in their respective countries.

Boroume requested an update on developments and timeframe regarding the announced revision of marketing standards of agri-food products. The co-chair explained that this initiative is led by the Directorate-General for Agriculture and it is planned for the 3rd quarter of 2023, but no further information was available.