



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food sustainability, international relations  
**Farm to fork strategy**

## SUMMARY REPORT

### EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES & FOOD WASTE (FLW) SUB-GROUP ON FOOD LOSS AND WASTE MONITORING

#### DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

*3rd meeting online via Webex*

*11 October 2023 – From 9:30 to 12:30*

**Co-chairs (3):** Mr Bartosz Zambrzycki, DG SANTE, Ms Carola Fabi, FAO and Ms Hilke Bos-Brouwers, WUR

**Commission and EU bodies (9):** DG SANTE, AGRI, ENV, INTPA, RTD, EEA, ESTAT, JRC, MARE

**Member States represented (17):** DK, DE, EE, ES, FR, HR, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, HU, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE

**Private sector organisations (25):** CTC - CLEAN TECHNOLOGY CENTRE, FUNDACIÓN AZTI – AZTI Foundation, Confederazione Nazionale Coldiretti, COPA COGECA, Consorzio Bestack, DUH - Deutsche Umwelthilfe, ECSLA - the European Cold Storage and Logistics Association, EUPPA - European Potato Processors' Association, Europatat - European Potato Trade Association, FEBA - European Food Banks Federation, Food Waste Free United, FoodServiceEurope, EUCOFEL – FruitVegetablesEUROPE, Harokopio University, HOTREC, International Food Waste Coalition, LAST MINUTE MARKET, REGAL Normandie, RISE Research Institutes of Sweden, Thünen-Institute, Venturis HORECA, WUR - Wageningen University & Research, World Union of Wholesale Markets, WWF - World Wildlife Fund, NORSUS

**Observer:** NO

## 1. Introduction

The SANTE co-chair opened the meeting and presented the agenda.

## 2. Dutch National Monitor on Food Waste – progress on measurement in different stages of the food supply chain, presentation by Wageningen University and Research (WUR) ([PDF](#))

WUR presented advancements in food loss and waste monitoring via self-reporting in various sectors. WUR explained the differences in the monitoring and reporting system in the Netherlands before and after the adoption of the common EU methodology and highlighted the challenges posed by this transition. WUR presented the [Food Waste Free United initiative](#) by the Foundation Together Against Food Waste in the Netherlands, which gathers over 100 stakeholders from the entire food supply chain that are required to self-report on food loss and waste levels through templates developed by WUR. After obtaining sufficient quality data, WUR assists companies in developing the sector benchmark, which can be used in national monitoring.

**Estonia** asked whether it is difficult to motivate companies to participate in self-reporting and how to motivate them. **WUR** reiterated that there are a number of challenges with self-reporting, including clarifying definitions and the scope of food loss and waste, determining the quality of data, and motivating companies to participate. Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) reporting obligation can further motivate self-reporting efforts. Many companies are facing difficulties in reducing food loss and waste without looking beyond their own operations. Members of the Foundation Together Against Food Waste in the Netherlands receive support in the reporting process, which also motivates companies to participate. WUR highlighted the importance of communicating the impacts of food loss and waste to raise awareness of companies, including of environmental and economic impacts on food waste (by food category).

**FAO** inquired when the results of self-reporting will be published. **WUR** replied that the results of an exercise with supermarkets for 2020 have been [published](#). The reporting exercise with manufacturing companies will potentially be published in the future.

The **Commission** requested information about the percentage of self-reporting companies in terms of market share at national level. **WUR** replied that it depends on the sector: 80% of the market share for supermarkets is involved in self-reporting, 70% of the total production volume of bakeries and the majority of the potato processing companies are part of Dutch Potato Processing Association, where all members are participating in self-reporting.

The **Commission** asked how WUR provides support to companies in monitoring food waste. **WUR** replied that many WUR researchers are participating in the project. The initiative is financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality of the Netherlands and stakeholders of the Foundation Together Against Food Waste in the Netherlands.

**NORSUS** inquired how WUR is planning to take into account an increasing number of companies reporting and changes in definitions and data sets following the adoption of the EU measurement methodology. **WUR** replied that the monitoring methodology always included different fractions such as avoidable and

unavoidable food waste, as well as all destinations. WUR collected all data across the full matrix, therefore it was not difficult to adapt to the European definition.

COPA asked if the templates for reporting for the different sub-sectors in manufacturing are publicly available. WUR replied that it had not yet been decided whether to make them available.

### **3. Diagnosis of the generation of food waste in the Basque Autonomous Community, presentation by the AZTI Foundation ([PDF](#))**

AZTI presented an overview of the strategy against food waste in the Basque region of Spain, including the results of the study carried out by agents of the Basque food system in collaboration with AZTI to measure food waste in primary production, processing and manufacturing, retail and other distribution food, restaurants and food services, and households. It was concluded that 244.972 tons per year (111kg per person per year) are produced in the Basque region of Spain, with households producing 57% of the total food waste.

FAO requested information about the share of the losses in the primary sector compared to production volumes. AZTI replied that the primary production in the Basque region of Spain is low and, therefore, data obtained are different from the EU data and data found in the literature.

Venturis HORECA asked to explain about direct measurement and how counting/scanning takes place for the measurements in the food services sector. AZTI replied that some operators quantify the food waste they produce through direct measurement. Others take data on production and use these to estimate general quantities of food waste (by counting and scanning food products that are discarded).

The Joint Research Centre requested clarifications regarding the definition of "potentially usable material" reported for the primary production and manufacturing sectors. AZTI replied that this is material that can be used in animal feed, which is not included in the definition and quantification of food waste. It is possible to apply different strategies to determine the food surplus fractions and their different uses (for animal feed or human consumption).

The Commission inquired if and how AZTI cross-checked the results from their reporting with other statistics from Basque region of Spain and central statistical offices. AZTI replied that reporting is conducted on the Basque region of Spain level and yet needs to be comparable with statistics from other regions, which can be difficult due to the regional specificity (e.g. low primary production) of the Basque region of Spain. In 2025 AZTI will repeat the questionnaire and make comparisons, as well as assess whether the prevention actions have an impact on the reduction of food waste and loss.

### **4. Mapping of food waste in public meals in 2022 and waste compositional analysis in Swedish households, presentation by the Swedish Food Agency and exchange with members ([PDF](#))**

The Swedish Food Agency presented the mapping results of food waste in public meals (only edible parts) in schools, preschools and elderly care, which was based on voluntary self-reporting by 185 municipalities in Sweden. The study concluded that food waste is higher in receiving kitchens compared to producing kitchens; there is higher food waste in smaller municipalities. The Swedish Food Agency also presented

the food waste compositional analysis (edible parts) in Swedish households across 15 municipalities. The study concluded that fruits and vegetables are thrown away the most (36%), followed by bread and bread products (19%). In the residual waste, a large part of the food is wasted in its packaging and in unopened packaging.

**WUR** inquired if the Swedish Food Agency provides supporting material for measuring, such as instructions, scales and forms. **Sweden** replied that they provide instructions and a handbook to municipalities to support the self-reporting.

**Regal Normandie** inquired if the data are recovered directly or through an internet application. **Sweden** replied that there is an online reporting system, where municipalities provide answers through the form.

**WUR** asked about the quantitative difference between food waste in the receiving and producing kitchens. **Sweden** redirected **WUR** to the report and suggested to contact them directly for further information.

**Venturis HORECA** questioned regarding the key reasons for food waste in schools. **Sweden** highlighted the lack of time to eat, pupils not liking the food, the noisy environment.

**WUR** inquired about the ratio between food waste from the households in biowaste and in residual waste and if the separation of edible/inedible fractions in household food waste is always possible. **Sweden** replied that the share of edible parts of food waste are the same in separately collected biowaste and residual (mixed) waste. The separation in the household is possible although difficult and requires training to categorize food waste as edible or inedible.

**The International Food Waste Coalition** requested information about the quantification process for the edible/inedible ratio in public catering and the frequency of measurement. **Sweden** replied that in respect to public meals, all the food that is cooked and served was counted as edible. There was a small amount of inedible fraction in the kitchen waste.

Several questions were raised about the measurement of food waste in households, concerning the methods and timeframe (**Venturis HORECA, Estonia**). **Sweden** replied that household food waste had been measured since 2012, based on waste statistics but also on waste compositional analysis from which the edible fraction was calculated. Diaries were used to capture information on food waste discarded down the drain.

## **5. National measurements of food losses in Sweden, presentation by the Swedish Board of Agriculture [\(PDF\)](#)**

**The Swedish Board of Agriculture** presented progress on food loss monitoring in Sweden, focusing on 8 commodities, namely: beef, pork, milk, seafood, milled wheat, potatoes, carrots, and strawberries. The results indicate that, pre-slaughter losses were 8 % of beef production, 3 % of pig production, 0,4 % of milk production in Sweden 2020, calculated in slaughtered weight. Over 40 % of edible by-products at slaughter of pigs and cattle did not become food. 32 % of carrots, 17 % of potatoes did not leave farms and packeries

to become food in 2021. Pre-harvest losses of milled wheat were 3 % in 2020, and field studies indicate that up to half of the strawberry harvest was left in field 2022. Of the total catches of fish, 67 % go to feed, but from the fish and shellfish intended for food, losses were 8 % in 2021. For vegetables, field studies were limited but studies at packeries covered a large share of production, as were studies at slaughterhouses and from fisheries. The eight reports also present factors behind the loss and waste and suggestions for actions for more of the products to become food. Each report has an English summary, and a final report in English, covering all studies, will be published at beginning of 2024.

**NORSUS** questioned how food losses are defined. **Sweden** replied that they covered products left in field after harvest, but for some products such as potatoes and wheat there are also available statistics on wild life damage in field which were included. Sweden chose to gain as much knowledge as possible about losses for each type of product, in order to have the best possible knowledge to take action on food loss reduction, rather than doing exactly the same for all products.

**WUR** inquired about the methodology of the studies and how contacts are established with farmers for the measurement. **Sweden** replied that the methodology is detailed in the published report and the farmer contacts were made available through farmers' and meat producers' organizations who have been involved in the project all along.

**FAO** inquired whether livestock studies are representative for the whole country and asked for clarifications concerning pre- and post-harvest losses. **Sweden** replied that studies for beef loss are representative for the country as a whole since data come from a national bovine registry covering all cattle in Sweden, while studies for pigs' loss cover 40% of the national market. Additionally, it was clarified that they used similar weights for the animals dead at farm, as animals at same category, breed and age in the Swedish official slaughter data. Stillborn calves and pigs were included, however they were given a very low weight (slaughter weight estimated at 20 and 1 kg respectively). They were included since this also can be reduced with breeding programs and monitoring. The losses will never be zero but can be reduced with even more focus on animal health and welfare, improving stables, management, increased emergency slaughter etc. The same applies to vegetables where improving the conditions for cultivation, storage, quality, planning, protection from pests and disease, weather variations, increased processing can increase the food yield.

**UNEP** asked if Sweden has plans to use these data to map upcycling opportunities for key edible food loss streams. The **Swedish Board of Agriculture** replied that there is ongoing discussion about results from voluntary agreements where retailer and producer organisations and food industry are involved. The Swedish Board of Agriculture is planning to organize meetings with farmers and industry organizations on actions needed to reduce food losses according to the reports. One challenge for reducing food losses is the processing capacity and need for product development and innovation.

**COPA** asked how Sweden takes into consideration yearly variations in studies. **Sweden** replied that different factors affect losses, for example, crop loss in the field greatly depends on the climate conditions of a specific year. This can make measuring more difficult against the target. Sweden focuses on measuring progress with respect to actions taken to reduce food losses rather than comparing exact data between years as there will be a lot of variations. Sweden hopes to repeat this in-field measurement exercise at 2025,

which is the deadline of the national target. The analysis of data based on other production statistics may be more frequent.

## **6. Monitoring the activity of European Food Banks, presentation by the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) ([PDF](#))**

**FEBA** presented the updates on data collection and digital transformation activities, focusing on the online Observatory on Food Donation, an online platform which provides an interface for each FEBA member with infographics and dashboards, updated in real time. The data are submitted by members and validated by FEBA. Concerning the impact of the socio-economic crisis, an assessment for the period January-December 2022 indicates that the gap between surplus food quantities and food demand increased for the majority of FEBA members.

**WUR** inquired if there is a possibility of having a similar infographic with national food banks' data. **FEBA** replied that through the online platform, members can visualise their own data as well as the aggregated numbers., Such data visualization can be downloaded and used for different purposes. The **Commission** inquired whether FEBA members receive fresh or frozen fish donations of undersized fish, which cannot be marketed under current EU rules. **FEBA** replied that their Italian member, Banco Alimentare, receives donations of confiscated fish by public authorities (illegally caught or not respecting standards) and redistributes them to charities. FEBA expressed its availability to share more information with the Commission in this regard.

## **7. Conclusions and wrap up**

The **Commission** co-chair concluded the meeting by thanking all presenters and participants for their participation and the valuable information provided. The **FAO** co-chair highlighted the strong nexus between food prices and food insecurity and encouraged Member States to report on the Food Loss Index. The **WUR** co-chair emphasized that food loss and waste have an impact on the environment, health, and food security.