RISING TO THE FOOD WASTE CHALLENGE
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FOREWORD

Around 88 million tonnes of food are wasted annually in the EU. If there is no action to change this, food waste could rise to over 120 million tonnes by 2020.

Food waste occurs all along the food supply chain: on the farm, during processing and manufacturing, in shops, in restaurants and canteens and in the home. The reasons vary widely and can be sector-specific.

Zero food waste may seem impossible today. However, it is everyone’s possibility to contribute to reducing it to a very minimum. This is precisely what the retail and wholesale sector is doing, cooperating with suppliers and producers, and raising consumer awareness. Recent data from the EU-funded FUSIONS project show that 53% of food waste is created in households, 19% in food processing, 12% in production, and 5% of food waste in wholesale and retail. Every actor has a contribution to make, focusing on where it can have most influence, based on its role in the value chain. It is only through a combined effort by everyone in the supply chain that we will be able to make a difference.

Retailers and wholesalers take this issue very seriously. Reducing food waste not only contributes to a more sustainable use of food, but also helps to reduce revenue losses. Every discarded item costs money, which ultimately feeds through to the prices consumers pay. The sector goes beyond what legislation requires, through initiatives including the 2012 Retail Agreement on Waste, and more recently, the resolution of the Consumer Goods Forum, under which leading food companies and retailers have pledged to halve the amount of food wasted within their operations by 2025.

The causes of food waste in retail shops and the wholesale sector are many and varied: overestimating the precise level of consumer demand; seasonal fluctuations in the supply of fresh food; seeking to meet consumer expectations of finding the products they want on the shelves at any time, including just before closing; growing sales of “ultra-fresh” products; package sizes which do not take account of the growing proportion of single-person households; consumer misunderstanding of the meaning of “best before” and “use by” date labels, leading to perfectly edible food being thrown away unnecessarily.

Retail and wholesale have shown a consistent commitment to putting food to good use, and are pursuing a whole range of measures to avoid food waste all along the supply chain - before delivery, in stores and beyond. Consumers’ preferences, their personal requirements and restrictions differ from one country to another, and often within an individual country. Companies tailor their approaches and their business models accordingly.

The vast majority of initiatives have been launched by companies alone or together through associations, and developed to meet the specific requirements of their supply chain. In some countries, governments have taken the lead, as in the UK programme “Love food, Hate waste” or the Spanish agreement “Más alimento, menos desperdicio”.

The solutions to food waste highlighted in this publication illustrate how the sector is addressing the food waste challenge, working with suppliers and consumers. These examples – and there are many more - have been chosen to show the breadth and variety of how retailers and wholesalers are tackling waste, and include both company-specific and country experiences.

I hope you enjoy reading about these initiatives and the results they have achieved, and that they will inspire others to take up the best practice they represent, and pursue further action on reducing food waste.

January 2017

Christian Verschueren
Director-General EuroCommerce

1 - http://www.eu-fusions.org/phocadownload/Publications/Estimates%20of%20European%20food%20waste%20levels.pdf
FIGHTING FOOD WASTE –
OUR KEY MESSAGES

> **Preventing waste is our priority:** quite apart from the environmental and social arguments for not wasting wholesome food, it simply does not make good business sense. While some waste is unavoidable, good planning and making the right judgment on what consumers will buy can make the difference.

> **Retailers and wholesalers work hard to prevent food waste from happening in the first place:** guaranteeing, for example, that they will buy all of a farmer’s whole crop, making the most of misshapen or unattractive fruit and vegetables in soups or prepared foods, or arranging faster delivery to maximise their shelf life. To support customers in their efforts to reduce the amount of food they dispose of, retailers are replacing promotional “buy one, get one free” products with “buy one, get one free later” or “get one free to freeze”. Where surpluses arise, businesses try in the first instance to use them up, including ensuring that food which is good to eat, but cannot be sold, is redistributed to those who need it most, often helping with the delivery and logistics for charitable bodies. Where food waste cannot be prevented, donating food can be a solution. To support this, in June 2016, the European Federation of Food Banks (FEBA), EuroCommerce and FoodDrinkEurope jointly developed and launched "Every meal matters", a guide that shows in a step-by-step way how best to donate food.

> **Working together to build a sustainable supply chain:** this is not a challenge that any one of us can address alone. In the past, retailers and wholesalers focused on reducing waste on their own: we now try to work together with suppliers and consumers to tackle waste - before delivery, in stores and beyond. This cooperative approach allows us to pursue a whole range of measures, from building a better understanding of the needs and consumption habits of consumers to developing products tailored to the needs of different types of consumers. Only by combining the efforts of all supply chain actors can we make a real difference. This is why EuroCommerce has become a member of the newly-created EU Platform on food waste. The Platform brings together national and international stakeholders and all supply chain actors, including consumers and NGOs.

> **Governments can help us:** often EU and national legislation gets in the way of donating food which is still good to eat to people who need it most. There is an urgent need for governments to pay attention to the practical problems retailers and wholesalers face when making donations, including for example their treatment under VAT rules. The Commission could also help us in our efforts to prevent and reduce food waste by encouraging best practice across Member States and addressing regulatory barriers. For example, authorities could consider allowing retailers to redistribute chilled and perishable food items that have been safely frozen in store before they reach their “use by” date, a practice not accepted in all Member States. Measures should be based on evidence of potential waste reduction and on a sound understanding of consumer behaviour. For example, removing “best before” dates with the aim of cutting food waste may in fact lead to consumers throwing more food away if they no longer recall when they bought the product in question.

> The retail and wholesale sector is diverse, and a combination of well-designed regulation and voluntary action which reflecting this can deliver the best results: the sector is about serving consumers and meeting their individual preferences and requirements. That means that a solution which works in one country or even in one part of a country may work less well in another. Flexibility allowing individual companies and countries to identify the most appropriate actions – supported by smart regulation – is the best way to ensure progress in tackling food waste.

> **Retailers and wholesalers are already contributing to governments delivering on their commitments under UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030.** The sector supports the Champions 12.3 initiative, a coalition of executives from governments, businesses, international organisations, research institutions, farmer groups, and civil society dedicated to accelerating progress toward achieving this target. European retailers and wholesalers also support other key global initiatives such as the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) Food Waste Resolution – a pledge by leading food companies and retailers to halve the amount of food wasted within their operations in 2025 – and the Food Loss and Waste Protocol, a multi-stakeholder global accounting and reporting standard for food loss and waste.
In addition to working together in their national associations, the majority of our food retail companies have had long-standing individual initiatives to prevent and reduce food waste. A sample of these initiatives is presented here, describing retail and wholesale companies’ actions:

- With their supply chain,
- In their shops,
- Engaging consumers,
- Supporting the local community.

Much food waste arises before the food arrives at the warehouse or distribution centre, or between those and the store. This is why, even before food reaches the shop, retailers and wholesalers take measures to make sure they are reducing food waste further up the supply chain.

Companies continuously seek to optimise their merchandise planning and control systems in order to guarantee a supply of goods tailored to meeting the current needs of the market. Using a range of different methods, they seek to ensure that the amounts of products ordered correlate closely with actual demand. They use automated ordering and forecasting systems based on sales data from previous years, and on weather forecasts. For example, stores will order more barbecue meat when the weather is fine than during rainy periods. In this way, stores are able to match their supplies to likely demand and avoid surplus stock and wastage.

Logistics managers work to minimise the levels of food product losses arising from mistakes in delivery. They also look to keep transport routes between warehouses and stores as short as possible, and an uninterrupted cold chain for products from the producer all the way to the refrigerated shelves in shop branches. This is reinforced by training suppliers to apply these principles consistently.

Companies encourage their suppliers to deliver food products as quickly as possible after they receive them, in order to extend the remaining shelf life. This has advantages for everyone: retailers can offer fresher goods to their customers, and customers have more time to consume the product before its expiry date.

Retail companies also work with farmers to ensure that they grow produce to meet international safety and quality standards, so that crops do not have to be discarded unnecessarily.
GERMANY
METRO CASH & CARRY
Since the end of the nineties, METRO Cash & Carry has established “Supplier Qualification” programmes, enabling suppliers and small farmers to meet international standards recognised by the Global Food Safety Initiative (e.g. Global GAP, IFS or the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)). Local processors of fresh foods like fish, meat and dairy produce are trained in all aspects of hygiene and food safety during storage, transport and processing. This contributes to reducing post-harvest losses, increasing the volume of marketable products, awareness raising on sustainable handling of resources and improving producers’ income.

PORTUGAL
SONAE
Since 1998, Sonae has been helping agricultural food producers to adapt their production to reflect the needs and preferences of consumers, avoiding over-production through the “Clube Produtores Continente” covering more than 4,000 individual producers.

Since 2002, Sonae has supported agricultural producers to improve logistics by defining the amount of product by package type according to the needs of different types of families and in this way to offer customers more balanced and tailored portions.

JERÓNIMO MARTINS
Also in Portugal, Jerónimo Martins set up a number of partnerships with Portuguese producers to reduce food waste on the farm. This involves using non-standard vegetables in its processed private-label products and ready meals. In this way, vegetables which are perfectly good for human consumption, but are not sold in store, can usefully be deployed in food.

Jerónimo Martins has adopted a framework for purchasing these vegetables, using them in existing recipes in Pingo Doce’s restaurants, take-away sections and pre-washed and pre-cut vegetables for salads and soups, and in Recheio’s cash-and-carry low-price range. This led to a considerable reduction of food waste in 2014 and 2015, with 17,000 tonnes of vegetables which would otherwise have been discarded being used in nourishing and wholesome food products.

UK
MARKS & SPENCER
Waste management forms an integral part of Marks & Spencer (M&S) Silver Factory programme with suppliers. Suppliers are encouraged to reduce waste, reuse and recycle where possible, and find alternative uses for by-products that they cannot use. Through the M&S supplier exchange programme (where groups of suppliers gather to share knowledge), the company has facilitated and provided tools for waste mapping as well as introducing a number of redistribution partners. Currently, 52% of M&S suppliers send zero waste to landfill. Forty per cent of M&S sales (by volume) come from Silver Factories; of these, four sites, representing 10% of M&S sales, have reached the top level of Gold Factory.

TESCO
Tesco has set up agricultural hubs staffed by trained agronomists in Europe, South America and Africa. These hubs act as eyes and ears on the ground, providing insight on the causes and quantity of food being wasted. Recently, the African hub flagged that a specification for fine beans was causing unnecessary waste on farms in Kenya. Tesco widened the specification and stopped trimming the beans. The result was that 15% more of the crop is now being used rather than going to waste.

SPAIN
MERCADONA
“The whole tree” is the name Mercadona has given to a strategy implemented since 1998, involving the company buying the whole of a supplier’s fruit and vegetable crop, even if not all of it meets consumers’ expectations in terms of appearance. These are redirected to other Mercadona suppliers to make soup, jams, sauces, juices and other food products, preventing them from being wasted.
Efforts to reduce waste do not stop when food reaches the store.

Purchasing departments increasingly adapt to the varying sizes of households by ordering different pack sizes for the same product. This helps customers find the right size for their needs, and avoid having leftovers which simply end up in the bin. Equally, the flexibility provided by service counters in the stores enables consumers to order smaller quantities to suit the amount they expect to use.

In supermarkets, trained staff regularly checks the quality of goods – for example, by examining appearance and condition – as well as checking if they have passed their “best before” date. Fruit and vegetables whose appearance no longer meets the customer’s standards but are otherwise in perfect condition are not discarded, but processed further – for example, for salad bars or other preparations. When large amounts of a product are in stock, special promotions help to sell off the goods quickly. Equally, if, in spite of all these measures, products are getting close to their expiry date, stores often reduce their price and label them for rapid sale. Many stores have separate fridge space or special points near the check-out areas to display price-reduced items.
The Consumer Goods Forum’s Food Waste Resolution

In June 2015, the Consumer Goods Forum, the global industry network bringing together 400 retailers and manufacturers across 70 countries, agreed on a resolution to halve the amount of food wasted within the operations of its members by 2025.

This target will be achieved both by individual company initiatives, by engaging with their supply chains and end consumers and by working collectively in partnership with governments and NGOs.

Food Waste Resolution

In June 15, our Board of Director agreed a resolution on food waste, with the aim of halving the amount of food wasted within the operations of our retailer and manufacturer members by 2025. The Resolution is of voluntary character, but authoritative (non-binding in a legal sense). It was votes upon by the Board on behalf of our members.

“As the Board of the Consumer Goods Forum, we recognize that food waste is a major social, environmental and economic challenge. It undermines food security, contributes to climate change, consumes scarce natural resources such as water unnecessarily, and costs money. We are committed to doing our part to help reduce food waste. Our aim is to:

First prevent food waste, then maximize its recovery towards the goal of halving food waste. Within our own retail and manufacturing operations by 2025, versus a 2016 baseline.

Contribute to the UN goals by 2030 to halve per capita global food waste at the consumer level and to reduce food losses production and supply chains post-harvest losses and maximize the value of the remaining waste.

We will achieve both by individual company initiatives, by engaging with our supply chains and consumers (where material) and by working collectively in partnership with governments and NGOs.”

France

Carrefour

Over the last two years, Carrefour has drawn on new forms of expertise by working with start-up companies in several European countries (including France and Spain) to develop innovative solutions such as geolocation of promotions on products with short use-by dates and optimisation of donations to charities.

Belgium

Ahold Delhaize / Delhaize

In 2015, Delhaize Belgium, started a partnership with the Brussels Beer Project to use its unsold bread to produce local beer, which was then sold in Delhaize Brussels stores. This partnership, has resulted in the sale of 8,445 litres of Babylone Beer, made from more than 1,000 kg of donated bread. Furthering its efforts in promoting the circular economy, Delhaize Belgium is driving product innovation aimed both at meeting customers’ needs and driving down food waste.

Netherlands

Ahold Delhaize / Albert Heijn

What can we do with food that is going to waste? At Instock, the answer is: use it to make delicious, nutritious meals. At this restaurant, the brainchild of four Albert Heijn associates, food products that would otherwise go to waste are given new life. Every morning, the Instock team collects its “harvest” (which changes every day) from Albert Heijn stores, part of Ahold Delhaize Group. So the menu is always a surprise: for the chefs as well as the customers. For breakfast, lunch and dinner; Instock chefs “turn a brown banana into ice cream, and a misshaped Brussels sprout into kimchi for your burger.” Sponsored by Albert Heijn, but operated independently as a foundation and as they point out, “Throwing away food is not only about money; it is also about the waste of energy spent on packaging, transporting, cooling and preparing the food.” As a results Instock saves about 2,000 kg of food every week.
Marks & Spencer’s Love Food, Hate Waste campaign in the UK.
ROMANIA
AHOLD DELHAIZE / MEGA IMAGE

“Fresh Corners”, which Mega Image, part of the Delhaize Group, initially launched as a pilot project in 2012, sells fruit and vegetable juices and salads made in the store from safe, healthy produce that is approaching its “sell by” date. This initiative reduces the amount of food wasted and is popular with customers looking for fresh, healthy food products. In 2014, Mega Image expanded the “Fresh Corners” project from 57 to 71 locations.

GERMANY
KAUFLAND

Since 2009, Kaufland has consistently reduced prices for food products close to their “best before” date. As a key strategy to avoid food waste in stores, the company constantly monitors “best before” dates and progressively reduces prices as the “best before” date approaches and attaches special labels to attract customers’ attention. Kaufland also offers daily fresh products, such as fruits and vegetables as well as baked goods at reduced prices just before closing time. Expired, but safe products are either returned to suppliers for further utilisation or Kaufland makes them available to food banks or other charitable institutions. Staff are motivated to reduce waste by a regular internal contest which identifies stores which perform best on this.

AUSTRIA
SPAR

Since 2013, SPAR Austria, in consultation with the Vienna University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), has implemented three methods of reducing food waste in the stores:

> Wherever possible, SPAR and the supplier cooperate to discuss and adjust the “best before” date to provide optimal shelf life.
> The sale of products at a reduced price shortly before the “best before” date has been brought forward. In most stores, SPAR has cooperation agreement with charitable institutions to take surplus stock.
> SPAR has developed new packaging formats so that, for example, a pack of lemons can be opened, any bad fruit taken out, and the rest put together again with other sellable ones. Before that, the entire pack had to be thrown away.

PORTUGAL
SONAE

Since 2002, Sonae has set up several ongoing loss-prevention actions together with their commercial and operations departments. Measures such as adjusting variety, space and quantity devoted to each item according to their sales potential; adjusting the ordering process and the supply units (number of units per box) or ensuring quick resolution of overstocking, helps to minimise losses and generation of waste.

AUSTRIA
LIDL

Lidl Austria not only cuts the price of products close to their “best before” date by 30%, but also has a “pre-emptive system”: this estimates the period of time in which the consumer may realistically consume the food product in question, allowing them to introduce the price reduction a few days before it reaches the “best before” date. This allows customers the time to use up the product without having to waste anything.

JERÓNIMO MARTINS

Jerónimo Martins encourages their employees to take an active role in reducing food waste. This includes: sorting food products for donation to charities and NGOs; producing corporate videos to share the company’s actions in fighting food waste with employees; issuing an “Open Letter” describing the Group’s work with NGOs; publication of articles in the company magazine, and a corporate book “Less is More” (recognised in 2015 by the Pearl Awards and by the Content Marketing Awards) to promote action by Group’s managers to eliminate food waste.
Almost 53% of food waste generated in the EU arises in the home, offering the biggest scope for reducing food waste. Tackling food waste at business level requires increasingly smart management, but can be implemented within organisations by introducing coordinated sustainable procedures. With consumers, avoiding waste, while preserving food quality and maintaining food safety levels, requires persuading consumers to change their habits, which is a lot harder.

Food waste caused by consumers can arise for a range of reasons:

- Lack of knowledge and awareness of home food storage and waste reduction, including basic culinary skills for use of “left-over” food;
- Poor understanding of the difference between “best before” and “use by” dates on products;
- Throwing out things that could be used in other dishes (i.e. some parts of meat thrown away that could be used as ingredients for another meal);
- Poor appreciation of the actual value of foodstuffs, leading to unconsidered or thoughtless discards;
- Exaggerated consumer expectations of a perfect appearance of fresh produce.

Consumers are at the heart of the retail business, and retailers work hard to meet constantly changing consumer demands and tastes. Companies are working with consumers to help them reduce the amount of food thrown away at home. They can exert influence by persuasion but cannot force their customers to change their habits. The initiatives which have the best chance of success are ones which go with the grain of consumer demand, which alert them to the issues and keep them properly informed of why avoiding food waste is important.

The Retail Agreement on Waste

In 2012, under the Retailers’ Environmental Action Programme (REAP), some of the largest retail companies and federations committed to carrying out awareness-raising campaigns on waste reduction on a global and/or national level by the end of June 2014. 26 REAP signatories from diverse sectors within retail signed this ‘Retail Agreement on Waste’.

The wide-ranging and imaginative initiatives created by retailers in the context of this Agreement demonstrate the creativity of the sector in developing original ideas and engaging with consumers. These initiatives have reached a large number and range of consumers, who have been encouraged to adopt more sustainable lifestyles and reduce unnecessary waste, while saving their own hard-earned money and increasing their purchasing power.

The Agreement has provided a basis for further activities in this area.

ITALY
METRO CASH & CARRY

Wholesalers also play an important role in preventing and minimising food waste. They engage with their professional customers, particularly the hotels, restaurants and catering (HoReCa) sector, to promote food waste reduction alongside specific measures to prevent food waste. In 2015, METRO Italy launched its “Schisceta Reverse” initiative with the World Food Programme (WFP) selling doggy bags for restaurants, allowing customers to take home any food they could not finish. Part of the purchase price is donated to the WFP. HoReCa companies also receive information about how to make their businesses more sustainable and subsequently use communications materials delivered with the boxes which they can use to raise awareness among their customers.

FRANCE
CARREFOUR

Carrefour’s French hypermarkets have for many years been adopting innovative ways of helping consumers reduce the food they discard, for example by selling reusable Vegetabags, which slow the ripening process for fruit and vegetables and keep them crisp and fresh longer. As part of World Food Day 2016, Carrefour invited customers in one of its stores in France to discover the innovative solutions to food waste which the company has adopted across its global network of stores. These included an initiative launched in Belgium to group together single bananas, or an initiative to bake bread on site in Poland and France for bread batches to meet demand throughout the day. These have been tested further in the many countries in which Carrefour operates.
FRANCE
AUCHAN
In 2014, Auchan France launched the “Quoi ma gueule?” campaign and gave “ugly” vegetables a new lease of life by offering them at reduced price to their customers. Fruits and vegetables considered being too big, too small, or the wrong shape can be bought without having to compromise on taste or quality. To make it possible for customers to buy single units of products usually sold in multi-packs, Auchan France also came up with the idea of having bar codes not only on multi-packs, but also on each of the items in them.

UK
MARKS & SPENCER
Marks & Spencer (M&S) has partnered with the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) in a campaign which aims to tackle five behaviours in the home in order to reduce food waste. M&S has carried out a number of events and campaigns, including most recently a “Salad Days” event in Manchester, engaging with consumers on how to make the most of salad and fruit (two of the top foods wasted at home). “Salad Days” was featured in various Manchester local newspapers and attracted over 500 attendees, as well as over a million timeline deliveries on Twitter.

TESCO
Tesco has also partnered with WRAP to challenge the entrepreneurial community to help find an innovative solution to household food waste as part of “Innovate UK’s Future Retail” competition. The final judging session took place in April 2016 and the winning company received £35,000 to get their idea off the ground, as well as having the opportunity to trial their technology in partnership with Tesco.

BELGIUM
COLRUYT GROUP
In order to guarantee absolute freshness of its products to its customers, Colruyt Group removes fresh products such as dairy and prepacked meat from the shelves 4 days before their “use-by” date. This means that there is plenty of time for the consumer to use these products after they have been purchased, which prevents food loss at the customer’s end.

AUSTRIA
SPAR
SPAR Austria is offering products shortly before their “best before” dates at reduced prices. Since 2013, the stickers with -25% and -50% carry the logo “Lebensmittel sind kostbar” (Food is precious) to draw the consumer’s attention to how he/she can contribute to environment protection and reduction of food waste. Every supermarket has a service counter where customers can buy delicatessen products like cheese, fish and bread spreads on demand. SPAR sells fruit and vegetables loose, so customers can buy no more than what they exactly need.
Jerónimo Martins' Less is More campaign.
Retailers understand the challenges people on low incomes face every day in putting good food on the table for themselves and their families: that’s why they do everything they can to sell quality food at affordable prices.

Retailers are the largest food donors in Europe. In order to stop food products fit for consumption but no longer suitable for sale being thrown away, the sector has been cooperating for a long time with food banks and charity organisations. These take food which cannot be sold in store and use it to provide meals for vulnerable people.

To support this commitment and help food to be donated in the most efficient way, EuroCommerce has worked with FEBA (European Federation of Food Banks) and FoodDrinkEurope on guidelines to encourage and make it easier for food manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers to donate their food surpluses to food banks by giving practical and straightforward answers to questions that businesses wanting to donate food may have.
BELGIUM

COLRUYT GROUP

Colruyt Group has been cooperating with food banks since 1997, donating directly from its central distribution centre. These donations have been increased in 2015 by expanding the number of distribution centres as well as the number of times that charitable organisations can collect food (from 2 to 5 times a week), leading to a reduction in food waste of 405 tonnes. In 2015, Colruyt Group launched a pilot project in which 3 stores directly donate unsold food to local organisations. In 2016, the scale of the test was expanded to 15 stores in order to cover the entire country. This way, the group expects to reduce food waste in the stores by 450 tonnes of food a year.

Since 2012, Colruyt Group has been keeping unsold bread separate. It is collected from its stores in order to be processed into fodder. By doing so, the company has avoided the waste of 3,283 tonnes of bread in 2014.

FRANCE

CARREFOUR

Since 1994, Carrefour has actively supported Food Banks and other charity organisations by giving food, especially fresh produce, from stores and on a daily basis. In 2015, donations by Carrefour amounted to the equivalent of 95 million meals in Europe for people in need. In its 3rd annual international Food Bank collection campaign in 2015, the Carrefour Foundation coordinated the collection of 10 million meals thanks to clients and employees in 10 countries. The Foundation helped food aid associations by co-financing refrigerated vehicles and equipment to maintain the cold chain, essential for hygiene and security. It also gave grants for 23 refrigerated vehicles and 9 cold rooms in Europe. In 2016, the Foundation financed food safety training for food banks and partner associations. Experts from the Group’s supply chain team also work alongside organisations in to help optimise warehouse management and the preparation of orders.

GERMANY

REWE GROUP

Since 1996, REWE Group has been supporting German food banks, donating to some 900 locally. Apart from regular donations by Penny and REWE stores throughout the year, special donation campaigns are organised regularly, inviting customers to contribute to the support of food banks. The latest nationwide REWE campaign in 2015 provided food banks with an additional 1,260 tons of food, worth €2.1 million.

SERBIA

AHOLD DELHAIZE / DELHAIZE

In February 2015, Delhaize Serbia launched a program to prevent food from becoming waste by donating unsold fruit and vegetables to local charities and food banks. Hunger and poverty are serious issues in Serbia, but donation of food directly from stores was not common. Today the donation program is running in more than 170 stores all over Serbia, more than 1000 tons of fresh products have been saved from being wasted, providing a healthy everyday addition to the diet for some 8000 beneficiaries.

In February 2015, Delhaize Serbia launched a program to prevent food from becoming waste by donating unsold fruit and vegetables to local charities and food banks. Hunger and poverty are serious issues in Serbia, but donation of food directly from stores was not common. Today the donation program is running in more than 170 stores all over Serbia, more than 1000 tons of fresh products have been saved from being wasted, providing a healthy everyday addition to the diet for some 8000 beneficiaries.
In 2014, Mega Image donated approximately €21,000 worth of food products that could not be sold due to damaged packaging to non-governmental organisations. Additionally, 138 Mega Image stores donated 290 tonnes of unsold food—primarily fruit and vegetables—to animal shelters.

In 2013, Mercadona in Spain established a programme of collaboration with soup kitchens. To ensure that the donated food can be cooked and consumed under optimum conditions, Mercadona makes daily deliveries to the soup kitchens of food no longer suitable for sale but fit for consumption. Currently, this collaborative effort covers over 90 soup kitchens all over Spain and is expected to expand in the near future.

Since 2012 Jerónimo Martins has been keeping track of the impacts of its donations by applying the London Benchmarking Group (LBG) methodology. Jerónimo Martins joined the LBG with a clear purpose in mind: to assess the impacts that donations have in surrounding communities of their over 3,000 stores. The model developed by the LBG allows the company to keep track of the number of people benefitting from food donations, while understanding how this support can enhance their lives. Questionnaires are sent annually to charities that collect feedback from beneficiaries. In 2015 alone, an estimate of over 500,000 people saw an increase of their quality of life as a result of over 8,000 tonnes of food donations.

In 2015, Sonae made food donations equal to more than 1 million meals, to more than 500 institutions, such as food banks and local NGO’s. “Missão Continente” (Sonae’s Corporate Social Responsibility campaign) has also established partnerships with national institutions – “Re-food 4 Good” and “Associação DariAcordar-Movimento Zero Desperdício” - to redistribute surplus food from the stores directly to families in need.

Distribution of food donations in Hungary.
POLAND

TESCO

In October 2015, Tesco announced its joint Central Europe ambition to ensure that no food that could be eaten will be thrown away, but instead given to charities and community groups to help feed those in need. Currently, every Central and Eastern European country in which Tesco operates donates surplus food from its stores to national food banks. So far over 3,000 tonnes of surplus food have been donated to food banks and charities helping to provide 7.5 million meals for people in need.

UK

MARKS & SPENCER

In October 2015, following a number of trials in 45 stores to establish the best model for getting surplus food to those in need, Marks & Spencer launched a new UK-wide charitable redistribution scheme to provide an online platform that connects every M&S store with existing and new local food charity partners. This single platform removes some of the logistical barriers to redistribution, including ensuring that all those registered have the correct charity and food hygiene credentials in place. M&S believes this will maximise the amount of food that can be redistributed and accelerate M&S towards its Plan A target of reducing food waste by 20% by 2020.

AUSTRIA

SPAR

Almost 90% of all SPAR Austria stores cooperate with social markets: if food products cannot be sold anymore but are still suitable for eating, SPAR gives them away to social causes in cooperation with NGOs like Caritas.

The Food Loss & Waste Protocol (FLW Protocol) is a multi-stakeholder effort including organisations such as the World Resources Institute (WRI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) to develop the global accounting and reporting standard for quantifying food and associated inedible parts removed from the food supply chain (referred to for simplicity sake as “food loss and waste”).

The FLW standard enables countries, companies and other organisations to account for and report in a credible, practical and internationally consistent manner how much food loss and waste is created and identify where it occurs, enabling the targeting of efforts to reduce it.
Many of EuroCommerce’s national association members promote best practice and undertake initiatives aimed at tackling food waste all along the food supply chain. Below are examples of what our members have been doing in this important area. This is by no means exhaustive, but gives a clear picture of retailers’ and wholesalers’ commitment to reducing food waste to a minimum.

**NETHERLANDS**

Vakcentrum - the Dutch professional organisation for independent SME retailers in the food and fast-moving consumer goods sector and for franchisees - has developed the Super Supermarket Certification Mark (Super Supermarkt Keurmerk, SSK). This label identifies entrepreneurs who are committed to responsible business practices and covers seven areas including waste collection & reduction, sustainable energy and engaging employees in these policies.

In 2016, the SSK foundation (Stichting SSK) which manages this certification scheme started a cooking channel to inspire customers to cook healthy and tasty food and make responsible choices. The channel features a chef and a local supermarket representative, not only presenting tasty recipes but also messages on sustainability. This includes tips for avoiding waste when cooking and ideas for using up leftovers.

Vakcentrum and the SSK foundation have also initiated various pilot projects with Wageningen University and the TNO research institute on e.g. raising consumer awareness and preventing food waste in the supermarket and at home.

CBL, the Dutch food retailers association, an active member of the Dutch Sustainable Food Alliance, has been working on several projects with universities, companies and the Dutch government to reduce food waste. The CARVE project aims at preventing food waste in the supply chain. One pilot project, with manufacturers and the Wageningen University, focused on the effects of ordering practices on food waste. Another project on ‘Understanding shelf life’ is aimed at helping consumers understand “best-by” and “use by” dates and the effect of shelf life on food waste in the home. It focuses both on raising awareness and projects to reduce food waste effectively. All Dutch food retailers have agreements with the Dutch Foodbanks on donating food to prevent it being wasted. Recent improvements in food safety regulations regarding food donations have made easier to donate for retailers.

**FRANCE**

In 2009, the French Retail Federation, FCD, along with FNSEA (farmers), ANIA (agro-food industry) and Solaal (an association promoting food donations), drafted a best practice guide for businesses seeking to donate food. The partnering organisations update this guide on a regular basis.

Since 2013, FCD has been part of the “National Pact against Food Waste” (Pacte National de Lutte contre le Gaspillage Alimentaire) that brings together all actors concerned with food waste under the supervision of the State. The signatories of this Pact are committed to taking concrete action on food waste.

FCD is also a member of the Demeter Club, an association gathering all parts of the supply chain to find solutions for sustainable logistics and support the fight against food waste.
The German Food Retail Association (BVLH) has in recent years coordinated an information campaign on the “best before” date led by the German Federal Ministry of Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer Protection. This campaign disseminated four million flyers at more than 20,000 points of sale in 10 different German retail chains. The flyer included questions and answers on the difference between “best before”, and “use by” dates, and on how long to keep an open packet.

A pocket-sized card gave advice and tips on how to control stocks at home, store foodstuffs properly and plan grocery shopping in advance. BVLH was able to contribute to giving better information to consumers on the meaning and consequences of date labelling, in particular the message that products past their “best before” date can usually still be eaten and need not be thrown away. This better understanding of the different dates on packaging represents a concrete contribution to reducing food waste.

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) in 2015 published combined retail food waste figures for 2013 and 2014 as part of a commitment to report on retail food waste under the BRC’s A Better Retailing Climate initiative. The BRC has committed to report on progress annually. The figures, using data from seven retailer groups, accounting for 85% of the UK grocery sector, show that very little food waste (180,000 tonnes per year, or 1.2% of all food waste) comes from these supermarkets and their distribution centres. These figures help to focus the discussion around food waste and associated resources towards the supply chain and the home, where the greatest reductions can be made, and where retail has a significant role to play.

There is little detailed data on agricultural food waste, and food waste on the farm is becoming a focus of attention in the UK. Supermarkets are already working with farmers and producer groups to tackle food waste and losses in agriculture, for example by making the most of the entire crop in the field. Other measures include reviewing current specifications for produce, smarter ways to forecast, and opportunities to improve storage and transportation.

In February 2016, the BRC, in conjunction with the National Farmers’ Union and AHDB (a UK statutory levy board funded by farmers, growers and others in the supply chain) hosted a round table discussion on food surplus and food waste linked to primary production of fresh produce. The round table agreed a definition of food waste in accordance with the one proposed by the EU FUSIONS project. There is clearly a shared aspiration to address food surplus and waste wherever it arises, including on the farm, while accepting that there may be challenging issues to resolve. The group agreed to work on how to reduce waste in primary production through a whole chain approach involving the establishment of working groups looking at data, communications and practical projects and tools.

Over a number of years, APED (the Portuguese Association of Retail Companies) has promoted a series of initiatives to raise awareness at national level, directed at consumers and focused on preventing food waste. The relationship of trust established with consumers allowed APED to set an example, and combine waste prevention principles with encouraging more sustainable lifestyles. Together, APED’s member companies were able in 2015 to donate enough food for more than 6 million meals, or more than 16,000 meals every day. In 2014 they donated food with a total value of more than 20 million euros, and supported more than 600 private charities, contributing to a major reduction in food waste.

In 2016, the Finnish Grocery Trade Association conducted pilot experiments in 14 grocery shops, from small corner shops to hypermarkets, testing various tools for reducing food waste. In just four months, in some shops food waste was reduced by up to 20%. The methods used focused on better management of data, ordering and inventory management. The pilots run until September 2016 and a report on the results will be published by the end of 2016. The pilots build on results of a previous study of current practices for creating efficiency in food retailing.
Retail Agreement on Waste

9 October 2012

State of Play

Waste is a major environmental problem and is still growing in importance. A fundamental cultural change in behaviour is vital to address the issue of waste and the other environmental challenges and pave the way to a resource efficient and sustainable economy and society.

Retailers are a large contributor to the EU economy. Despite the current economic crisis, retailers are committed to remain responsible actors, and are keen to play their part in addressing societal issues. Natural resources are becoming scarce, and retailers fully agree on the need to preserve them. Retailers therefore increasingly see waste as a valuable resource in its own right and are taking steps to reuse materials wherever possible so as to reduce reliance on raw material inputs.

Waste management, and especially waste prevention and reduction, is a core objective of most retailers. Many retailers have already set up waste prevention and reduction programmes with ambitious targets, which are furthermore regularly reviewed. They focus primarily on the way their companies operate. They continuously strive to reduce their waste in their operations with all the means at their disposal in the segments of the supply chain where they may have a direct control (logistics, product design, packaging, recycling etc.).

Retailers also often collaborate very closely with suppliers. They use their expertise to help their suppliers improve their production process so as to reduce the overall environmental footprint of their activities and the products they supply with them.

Looking Ahead

The challenges in the field of waste are collective. Waste represents a cost for the environment but also for society at large. Retailers are committed to play a role in the waste recovery chain and participate in the overall efforts of preventing and reducing waste further.

Despite being a minor direct contributor to waste, retailers are fully aware that many products which become waste are bought in their stores or on-line. On average every citizen living in the EU throws away around half a tonne of household rubbish every year.

For many products, the environmental impact of the waste generated is highest at the consumer level. Adapting and/or changing behaviour is essential to reduce it. Retailers are therefore committed to instigate, encourage and accompany consumers in their efforts to reduce the environmental footprint derived from waste. The retail sector is in a strategic position to do this. It wants to put its knowledge of consumers, its proximity to them and its extensive experience in communicating and informing them to raise awareness about waste issues.

With this agreement, retailers intend to further reach out to their customers and involve them in the cultural change needed to address the waste prevention and reduction issue, thereby contributing to paving the way to a resource efficient and sustainable economy and society.

Commitment

Measuring waste reduction at consumer level is very difficult in the absence of the involvement of other players, such as local authorities. This agreement will therefore focus on raising awareness. Each food retailer will carry out awareness raising initiatives on food waste and how households can reduce it. For non-food retailers, the awareness raising initiatives will focus on their main product range e.g. textiles, EEE. Each company will decide on an individual basis, the exact scope of the initiatives.

As responsible retail companies, each signatory to this agreement commits to:

For food retailers:

1. Carrying out, at least, two awareness raising initiatives on a global and/or national level by end of June 2014 on waste reduction.

These initiatives should focus on providing consumers with e.g.:
- General advice on how they can reduce the amount of food waste they generate e.g. how to handle, store and use food more efficiently
- Information about the actual meaning of “use-by” and “best before” dates in collaboration with the Commission’s information campaign
- Innovative marketing tools: shopping lists for consumers, information on prevention, etc.

2. Progress will be measured on the basis of the number of initiatives, the number of people reached by these initiatives. The latter will be calculated according to the number of visitors to the website, and/or the number of footfall in the stores etc.

3. Signatories will report on their initiatives by providing the relevant documentation (links to website, photos, reports etc.)

For non-food retailers:

1. Carrying out at least two awareness raising initiatives on a global or national level by end of June 2014 focusing on their main product range e.g. textiles, EEE.

These initiatives should focus on providing consumers with e.g. information on the various collection, reuse and recycling options available to consumers including any voluntary take-back and/or incentive for reuse, and the importance of correctly disposing of products.

2. Progress will be measured on the basis of the number of initiatives, the number of people reached by these initiatives. The latter will be calculated according to the number of flyers, and/or the number of visitors to the website, and/or the number of footfall in the stores etc.

3. Signatories will report on their initiatives by providing the relevant documentation (flyers, links to website, photos, reports etc.).

The REAP secretariat will collect the documentation of the signatories about the different initiatives and summarise them in a report published to coincide with the 2014 annual event. This report will be distributed to all retail associations for further dissemination.

1 Food waste at retail level is limited approximately 5% of the total amount of food waste along the supply chain. This results from improved logistics and monitoring. For food retail, recycling of consumption, retailers often collaborate with food banks. Retailers also reuse or recycle unused products. For example, organic waste is often recycled by fermenting it or by producing it into methane gas.
EuroCommerce is the principal European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 31 countries and 5.4 million companies, both leading multinational retailers such as Carrefour, Ikea, Metro and Tesco, and many small family operations. Retail and wholesale provide a link between producers and 500 million European consumers over a billion times a day. It generates 1 in 7 jobs, providing a varied career for 29 million Europeans, many of them young people. It also supports millions of further jobs throughout the supply chain, from small local suppliers to international businesses. EuroCommerce is the recognised European social partner for the retail and wholesale sector.

1 in 4 companies in the EU
and 99% of which are SMEs.

10% of EU’s GDP

29 million jobs
or 1 in 7 of all jobs, many of them young people.