



President's Address, IFWC Annual General Assembly

July 1st, 2016

At the outset, and before reflecting on the developments and progress of the International Food Waste Coalition in its first year, I will take a moment to remind the reader why **a group of like-minded companies created the International Food Waste Coalition.**

When we talk about global food waste, it's easy to get lost and overwhelmed by the numbers! Yet we know that, behind these numbers; behind the economic and environmental figures are social issues including impact on people.

- People and their access to healthy food.
- People involved in farming produce.
- People with a passion for more sustainable natural resource use, and
- People whose only daily meal comes from the surplus of others.

While we, as a Coalition, drive actions to reduce food waste, our ultimate objective is to bring real change, economic, environmental and social, that will help to create a more sustainable future for people and society.

Although we know that wasting food makes no sense ethically, environmentally, and sometimes economically why is it that at least one third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted?

Ethically, we must ask the question: Why is it that around 800 million people go hungry every day in a world of plenty?

Why is it that 55 million people in Europe are not able to afford a nutritious meal every second day?

The reason the numbers of hungry people are on the increase is not because we do not produce enough food. If only one-fourth of the food wasted globally was consumed, it would be sufficient to feed 870 million people, 12% of the world's current population. More people than are currently hungry.

In Europe, according to the latest estimates by the FUSION¹ project, around 88 million tons of food is wasted annually, with associated costs estimated at €143 billion.

¹ <http://www.eu-fusions.org/>

Economically, food waste represents high waste management costs and, simply, money wasted given the considerable amount of edible food thrown away every year in the EU.

Waste management costs include the maintenance of landfills, where food waste is most often disposed of, as well as transport costs, the operating cost of treatment plants, and separation costs in some cases.

We also know the significant environmental aspect of wasted food. If food loss and waste were its own country it would be the world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases after the USA and China.

Turning now specifically to the Coalition and our efforts over the past twelve months.

Our goal: to reduce food waste throughout our value chain and empower other companies to follow.

Food waste has no future in our world and we all have our unique and related responsibilities and roles to play.

All of the things we throw away have one thing in common: we no longer see any value in them. This can also apply to the food we waste. As long as we don't see its worth, we'll keep wasting it.

Turning this around and fighting food waste is about getting people to know, see, experience and feel the value of food.

The strategic principle of the IFWC is as simple as it is far reaching:

Prevent food waste by bringing back the value of food.

Despite growing awareness and the proliferation of associations, coalitions and bodies focused on food waste, I believe that the IFWC holds a unique position that unites the food services industry to build this future without food waste by focusing on prevention.

Therefore, over the last twelve months, we implemented our initial strategy built on three pillars:

- Promote value chain collaboration
- Develop and implement action-orientated programmes, and
- Participate in debates and drive decisions.

Our **value chain**, action-orientated approach with strong measurement and metrics also adds to the uniqueness of our efforts.

Why is value chain collaboration the first pillar?

Collaboration is the most effective way to reduce food waste, but it's also the most challenging.

The 2016 report by US-based ReFED² highlighted the following:

“Prevention often requires collaboration and spread costs and benefits across a greater number of stakeholders...there is a need to work on the entirety of the food chain, really from farm to fork, addressing the issue of food waste and sustainable healthy diets at each stage of the process, from agricultural production to transport, from storage to processing, from retailers to restaurants and last but certainly not least to consumers.”

They categorize this collaborative action as one of the less mature activities for achieving a significant reduction in food waste.

In this regard, we have developed a growing ecosystem of stakeholders and started a value chain dialogue.

We have concluded a global partnership with the FAO for 3 years and have the potential to create a future partnership with the EU-funded organization REFRESH³.

We also conducted 10 Coalition meetings with strong attendance by highly committed members.

The second pillar: action-orientated programmes.

We developed and launched the SKOOL pilot project in 3 countries and in 6 schools. More than 1350 children have been directly impacted and 1400 indirectly. We implemented a strong measurement and reporting system in the kitchens and the canteens and sites achieved an average of 14.3% food waste reduction, corresponding to 2.5 tons of food waste avoided.

The extension phase of the programme will commence in September 2016, with a broader scope, with free access to the whole programme across Europe planned for the 2017 school year.

And the third pillar: participate in debates and drive decisions.

The IFWC has been invited to, participated in and presented at multiple conferences (The Hague; Profel; World Forum; FUSIONS).

A well-communicated and coordinated press release in 5 countries has led to a number of inquiries by organizations wishing to more formally engage with the IFWC.

In just a short period of time, we have started to build a level of legitimacy that auger well for the year ahead. This allows us to be a voice at the EU to encourage the lifting of barriers and regulations which prevent the safe use of food resources in the food and animal feed chains.

² ReFED, A Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste by 20 Percent, 2016

<http://refed.com/?sort=economic-value-per-ton>

³ <http://eu-refresh.org/>

Finally, some words about the future and the year ahead.

In June, European Commissioner Andriukaitis⁴ stated:

“How can we ensure the nearly 10 billion people we expect to be living on this planet in 2050 will all have access to a sufficient supply of safe, nutritious food? This objective can be achieved, but only by working on the entirety of the food chain, pushing towards more innovation, new techniques, boosting global competitiveness, fostering sustainable growth...”

On this topic, the Coalition knows that collaboratively reducing waste must be an inseparable part of building the future for people.

Working towards a world without food waste is a global responsibility. It is a challenge in which we all have an active role to play, at each step of the value chain.

It is a task that requires a collaborative effort to create real impact.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all member companies for their commitment to the Coalition and their engagement on this topic.

I hope that we can build even greater collaborative efforts around our unique value chain approach in the year ahead. I strongly believe that, in a pre-competitive landscape, we have the potential to innovate relationships within the value chain and reduce food wasted or lost. Truly building a future without food waste, together.

Thank you.

Damien Verdier,
International Food Waste Coalition President



⁴ European Commission - Vytenis Andriukaitis, "Eat Stockholm Food Forum" – Rethinking Our Food Systems: Fighting Food Waste – 13 June 2016