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Denmark's Work to Reduce Food Loss & Waste

Prevention of food waste has been a strategic focus point at the national level in Denmark since 2010 and comprises of: the National Waste Prevention Strategy; prioritization and funding of research; ongoing dialogue with the food sector, trade organisations, and consumers; and international engagement within the Nordic countries, EU, and International Organizations.

The total amount of avoidable food waste in Denmark has been estimated at 720,000 tons per year. The households generate 260,000 tons per year and the entire service sector (trade and food service) generate 228,000 tons per year (data from 2011-13).

Recent initiatives include:

- The International Food Summit “Better Food for More People” in August 2016 with 100 international policy decision-makers, industry leaders, experts and gastronomy frontrunners to identify steps on how to ensure better food for more people, including how to prevent food waste.
- The “Green Development and Demonstration Program” and “Eco-Innovation Program” support innovative green solutions by businesses and research institutions to prevent food waste – for example by developing packaging solutions to prolong freshness of fruit and vegetables.
- Removal of legislative burdens in order to decrease food waste, including changes in taxation and changes that remove limitations in donations from food retailers.
- A “partnership for prevention of avoidable food waste” between businesses, organizations and authorities (29 partners in total). The partners share information and experiences, identify barriers in existing legislation, develop new ideas and co-operate to initiate new initiatives to prevent food waste.
- Support to initiatives from the entire food value chain through the “subsidy scheme for less food waste 2016-17.” 13 projects were initiated in 2016, for example projects raising awareness at consumer level, donation of surplus food, workshops at high schools, and new business models for marketing of second quality vegetables.
- The “Food Waste Hunters Initiative,” a task force of consultants who engage commercial kitchens in the food service sector to finding food waste reduction opportunities.
- A yearly national “Conference on Less Food Waste” in order to gather and inspire all actors in the entire food value chain to take actions.
- Teaching materials that provide children with practical tools and teach them the difference between 'use by' date and 'best before' as well as tips on how to store food so it does not go bad.
- A scientific approach on the complex challenges concerning prevention of food waste including monitoring of food waste. As a consequence of this the Ministry collaborates

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with several universities in order to generate knowledge on the extent of food waste, incentives and powerful instruments in order to procure feasible, sustainable and holistic solutions.

Prevention of food waste is for everybody to engage in. The Danish Ministry of Environment and Food therefore highly prioritizes a continuous dialog with all stakeholders throughout the entire food chain in order to ensure awareness, facilitation and progress.