

# CHAMPIONS 12.3

## The Netherlands' Work to Reduce Food Loss & Waste

### Food Waste

Over a period of time (2009 – 2015) the Dutch government has issued a number of policy letters in which we addressed the problem of food waste, set some clear goals (in 2009: -/- 20% in 2015; in 2015: SDG 12.3 -/- 30% in 2030) and formulated 6 lines of actions:

1. Transparency: clarity on waste figures through monitoring
2. Stimulating innovation and research
3. Raise awareness among the consumers and strive for behavioural change through public information.
4. Better understanding of and adaptation of regulation on date marking.
5. Stimulating food donation
6. Addressing the problem of food waste in the EU and worldwide

The Dutch government works with the Sustainable Food Alliance (hereafter Alliance), a partnership between the Dutch Food Retail Association (CBL), the Dutch Food Industry Federation (FNLI), the Dutch Federation of Agriculture and Horticulture (LTO), the Dutch Federation of Catering Organisations (Veneca) and the Royal Dutch Food Service Industry (KHN). Its mission is to make the food chain more sustainable, including through the reduction of food waste and reuse of the secondary resources.

The Dutch government has actively promoted the cooperation between the Alliance and the Dutch Association of Foodbanks in order to stimulate food donation and to reduce food waste.

Furthermore, we have invested in research in order to set up a monitor system and set up some public campaigns to raise awareness. Also, a special leaflet was made in which date marking was explained towards the industry in order to stimulate them to use date marking correctly.

In order to stimulate innovation and research, a Small Business Innovation Research-scheme with a budget of € 3.15 million was set up in 2010. This scheme, among other things, adapted conventional orders of foodstuffs by restaurants in theme parks by using concrete data and accounting for extraneous factors such as weather conditions and number of visitors. Also, a non-invasive O2 sensor was developed which makes it possible to detect leaky packaging individual so these items can be sorted out instead of a whole batch. Furthermore, reducing food waste is one of the leading topics in the Dutch top sector approach in which more fundamental and applied research is programmed.

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In 2015 we hosted the international conference in which the initiative Champions 12.3 was announced. And during the Dutch Presidency (first half of 2016) the Council has adopted conclusions on food loss and waste (FLW).

Despite all these efforts, the amount of food waste in the Netherlands was not significantly reduced. In order to give the battle on food waste a new boost, the Dutch Taskforce on Circular Economy in Food will be launched in early 2017 at the national High Level Meeting on Food organized by the Dutch Government. The Taskforce is initiated in the framework of REFRESH, an EU research project taking action against food waste (Resource Efficient Food and Drink for the Entire Supply Chain). There are Dutch Champions who will support the Taskforce.

## Post-Harvest Losses

The Dutch Government has published several [policy](#) letters about their priority theme of food security in the past few years. Reduction of post-harvest losses is one of building blocks of a sustainable food system. As the second largest exporter of agricultural products in the world, the Netherlands has an extensive knowledge and expertise about creating efficiency in agro-food chains. The Post-Harvest Network aims to make this expertise available for partners in developing and upcoming countries. Initiated by the Dutch Ministries of Economic and Foreign Affairs, Wageningen UR, and DIALOG, the Postharvest Network is a multi-stakeholder coalition envisioning a more sustainable and inclusive world in which food losses are minimized. This would result in food security, significant economic savings and gains, and reduced pressure on our environmental resources.

Since its launch in late 2014, the [Post-Harvest Network](#) is working towards transformational change: a systems change in paradigms, beliefs and behaviour. The mission of the Post-Harvest Network is to achieve a reduction of food losses – and thus contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 – by connecting all different actors from the Dutch Diamond, both nationally and internationally, bundle expertise and experience on postharvest losses and help develop sustainable solutions. In this our work looks at not only technical but also organizational and social innovation in the post-harvest food supply chains in low- and middle-income countries. The role of the [Post-Harvest Network](#) in this multi-stakeholder approach is to catalyse and facilitate mechanisms that will eventually result in substantial programs for the reduction of post-harvest food losses bringing all relevant stakeholders together in order to implement integrated solutions. Specifically, this can be broken down into creating and facilitating awareness raising on the issue, capacity building in the target countries, technology and innovation transfer from the Netherlands to the target countries and ultimately the redesign of value chains for realizing higher quality and value.

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The work ranges from awareness activities to measuring postharvest losses and redesign of value chains and up to policy input creation. Specific examples are a project in India where after an initial analysis of bottlenecks in the banana and tomato chain the chains are redesigned now for implementation of pilots as a next step. Another example is the analysis of important drivers of change in order to reduce food loss and waste.

## Global Conferences

The Global Conference 'NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE – Global action to stop food losses and food waste' was held in The Hague, The Netherlands from 16 to 19 June 2015. It was hosted by the Government of the Netherlands, in close cooperation with the Government of Vietnam, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the African Union Commission (AUC). The key objectives of the NO MORE FOOD TO WASTE Conference were to: identify areas with potential to trigger action; scale up solutions based on lessons learned and best practices to reduce FLW; highlight innovative approaches for cross-sectoral investment/collaborative financing; and champion active partnerships working to minimize FLW throughout the food supply chain. As a result of the conference, the Netherlands did bring the Champions 12.3 (Friends of No More Food To Waste) to life.

The Global Conference 'Investing in a Food Secure Future Conference' was organized by the Government of the Netherlands and co-hosted with the African Union and European Commission. It was held in Noordwijk, The Netherlands, from 4 to 6 July, 2016. The conference brought together participants from governments, international organizations, businesses, investment groups, research institutions and civil society to share their experiences and expertise and to partner in efforts to sustainably transform agriculture in order to achieve food security, improved nutrition, and rural growth. Fighting FLW was one of the main themes and led to several actionable outcomes. For example: UNEP offered to host and mobilize the Community of Practice on Food Waste. And Rabobank committed to intensify their commitment for the Patient Procurement Program. The Netherlands committed to set up two to four Agri-business incubators for Africa with specific attention to reducing post-harvest losses and climate smart agriculture. Preparations have started for exploring the first incubator.

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## Events

On November 25, 2014, the Agrologistic Forum Egypt was launched at the conference organized by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Cairo. The assessment report on agro-logistics losses of produce was presented giving specific insights in where the financial losses and losses of volumes occurred.

On November 5, 2016, the [Food Connection Challenge](#) took place in Amsterdam. After discussions with Dutch companies, Dutch students pitched their innovative business solutions, developed to address post-harvest issues of Ghanaian companies.

On October 20, 2016, the side event “Food losses and waste in the context of metropolitan food and nutrition security” took place at the CFS 43 in Rome. It was co-organized by the Post Harvest Network, Wageningen University & Research, CCAFS, the Dutch Ministries of Economic and Foreign Affairs and FAO.

In his new capacity as Permanent Representative to the UN Food and Agriculture Organizations in Rome, Ambassador Hoogeveen is working closely together with IFAD to organize a major event in Rome in the first half of 2017. This high level event will focus on smallholder farmers and specifically look into reducing Post-Harvest Losses.