

Members Best Practices in Tackling Food Waste

❖ *Common Actions Across the Network*

Euro Coop members have since long engaged in the fight against food waste. **Common actions** across the network include:

- ❖ A **shift from volume-led deals** ("buy one, get one free") to **value-driven promotions** ("half-price offers");
- ❖ **Harmonisation of price reduction practices** allowing products approaching the "best before" date to be sold at a discount;
- ❖ Making available **different portion sizes suitable for different types of households**;
- ❖ The development and use of **apps to help consumers reduce food waste**;
- ❖ Marketing and promotion of **ugly fruit and vegetables**;
- ❖ Constant **co-operation with suppliers** and **across the whole supply chain** (for example to **convert food waste into biogas**);
- ❖ Establishment of sound links with **food banks** and **charities**;
- ❖ Advocacy for any change in legislation that could make it **easier and cheaper to donate food** or to **reintegrate the production circle for other uses**;
- ❖ Establishment of **dedicated Prizes/Awards** (e.g. Environmental Prize for the best innovation to tackle Food Waste);
- ❖ **Partnership** with **national and local authorities**;
- ❖ **Partnering with Celebrities**;
- ❖ Create **dedicated webpages**.

Consumer co-operatives then also operate, among others, on the **principle of education, training and information**. This means that their action goes well beyond the store and translates into a broad spectrum of activities aimed at **changing consumer behaviour at home and in society**. On the issue of food waste, consumer co-operatives have for example launched **numerous campaigns, edited a wide range of publication materials and carried out educational activities in schools**.

All action has been centred on **restoring the value of food in all its dimensions**: the relevance to know **how to handle it**, its **origin**, **the role it has in a balanced diet**, the **cultural context** in which it is consumed and, of course, **all useful advice to avoid wasting it**. Knowing the **difference before 'best before' and 'use by dates'**, increasing knowledge about **how to store food**, including the adequate fridge temperature for the different kinds of foods and **defining clear shopping lists** are just a few of the many tips given in the context of these activities.

❖ *Snapshot: Concrete Actions*

Coop Sweden

To address waste in the production and processing stages, Coop Sweden became the first Swedish supermarket to sell "**wonky vegetables**" in autumn 2015. This fresh produce would otherwise have ended up as production or processing waste because of not meeting the expected aesthetic standards that consumers have become accustomed to.

Recently, the Swedish consumer co-operative Swedish retailer Coop has launched **new packaging** for its private label ground beef, which, among others, will double the shelf life of the product thereby reducing food waste.

The Co-operative Group

To avoid tomatoes from spoiling prematurely, The Co-operative Group in the UK use **laser technology** to pierce holes in the plastic packaging so that moisture levels are better regulated. The Co-operative Group have also moved away from **promotions** that are based on volume (“buy one, get one free”) towards ones that are **focused on value** (half price offers).

Recently, the Co-operative Group has made the decision to **end “last-minute” sales** of fresh produce to reduce the volume of edible food going to waste in its stores every day. Two hours before closing time, the national supermarket chain will remove items with a use by or best before date for that day, so they can be donated to thousands of charities and small community groups in time for them to be frozen or turned into meals.

Coop Denmark

To tackle waste that is generated by the way products are sold, Coop Denmark has started to **sell all its bananas individually**, rather than in bunches. This change is associated with 6,000 fewer bananas being wasted each day.

To help consumers waste less of the food that they buy, Coop Denmark have developed a **smartphone application (“Too Good to Go”)** that educates consumers on how best to store their food. The app has a repository of over 600 foods and guides consumers on how they can keep these foods fresh for as long as possible. This allows consumers to reduce their food waste and save money.

Furthermore, Coop Denmark sends **all its organic waste to biogas production** instead of incinerating it. The whole Coop Denmark network is now involved in the organic waste collection, thereby saving 10,000 tons of CO₂ annually and heating 5,700 households.

S Group

To incentivise consumers to buy food that is approaching its “best before” date, the S Group in Finland has had a **harmonised price reduction strategy since 2007**, whereby all food reaching the best before date is discounted. To deal with unavoidable food waste from their stores, the S Group produce a **biofuel** called **EkoFlex E85**.

More recently, the S-Group made a **pledge to reduce food waste** produced by its own operations by 15% by the end of 2020.

ANCC/Coop Italy

Coop Italy has been running the **“Buon Fine”** (“To the Good End”) programme since 2003. This sees edible but unmarketable foods (e.g. due to the packaging being damaged, or the products being close to the “use by” date) being withdrawn from shop shelves and allocated to associations that redistribute them to people in need. Through this project, in 2016 Coop Italy donated 6,000 tons of food to 943 charities, which could in turn provide 7 million meals to people in need.

Also, ANCC/Coop Italy runs since more than 40 years now the programme **“Coop Knowledge”** (“**Sapere Coop**”), which develops educational materials for schools, employees and consumer-

members aimed at raising awareness among the broader citizenship about healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

More recently, ANCC/Coop has finalised the “**White Book on Food Waste**”, which is an analysis on food intended for donation complemented with qualitative and quantitative data. Another initiative is the setting-up of the “**Coop Non Spreco**” (“Coop No Waste”) community, which is accessible via several media to support consumers, schools and institutions to reduce food surpluses. Also, there is a new law on food waste which ANCC/Coop has contributed to draft which has increased the number of foods which can be donated and extended the products’ expiry dates. The implementation has allowed for the launch of 2 new initiatives:

- 1) “**Eat Me Now**”, giving a discount from 20% to 66% on unsold fresh products which are approaching the expiry date;
- 2) “**Happy Hour**”, offering a discount from 30% to 50% in the hours preceding the closing of the store particularly on bakery products.

Hispacoop

In 2016, Hispacoop ran a campaign called “**Without Waste: Make the Most of Food**”. There were three strands to the campaign: a study on consumer behaviour with regards to managing food and how waste is generated in the home, the publication on a guide on how to best store food so that it lasts longer, and a series of 30 talks around Spain that were directed at consumers with the aim of informing them on how to best conserve food in the home.

One of the most recent ones is the campaign jointly run by Hispacoop and Eroski: “**Join sustainable consumption: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**”, aimed at raising consumer awareness on the issues of food waste reduction, resource reuse and correct leftovers and general litter disposal.

Eroski

Eroski has a dedicated webpage called “**Zero Waste**” on its website where it lists all last actions carried out to tackle food waste. Next to the co-operation with charities and food banks and the **marketing of ugly vegetables**, it has recently re-launched together with institutional partners the campaign “**More food, less waste.**”

Coop Norway

Coop Norway was proactively engaged in the setting up of the first Norwegian food bank, supported an initiative similar to the one on single bananas (please see the chapter on Coop Demark for reference), established Environmental Prizes dedicated to food waste and partnered with national stakeholders **to convert food waste into biogas.**

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