

Supermarkets to combat food waste

In the entire food chain, 2 billion Euro worth of food is wasted every week. In Dutch supermarkets alone, 1 million Euro is wasted every day, mainly vegetables, fruit, bread and dairy. How can supermarkets ensure that food waste is limited?



Meals from residual waste at Ekoplaza Organic supermarket chain Ekoplaza sells meals that are made from residues of fruit and vegetables. The supermarket chain wants to process an even bigger part of these residues in a high-quality manner, and will soon also offer organic compost and potting soil made from these residues. Steven IJzerman, Quality employee at Udea, says the meals are a success. After it became apparent that fresh produce is the biggest source of residual waste, Udea decided to do something about this. There was a lot of waste in their own cutting plant, and sometimes a pallet is rejected for quality reasons.



Plus combats food waste with 'OverLekker' PLUS, in conjunction with Hutten and Wageningen UR, has started a pilot for food reuse. The supermarket chain will make residues of tomatoes and onions from its stores available for the production of a new brand of tomato soup and tomato sauce: 'OverLekker'. Tomatoes and onions that are slightly damaged, are often left over. These are still high quality though, and ideal for use in soups or sauces. PLUS already donates wares to food banks, and makes them available for food recycling. "With this new initiative, we're taking a new step in the reuse of residues. Thanks to this partnership with Hutten, we are using residual tomatoes and onions for delicious and natural products," says Eric Leebeek, commercial director at PLUS

Juices and stews in UK In the United Kingdom, a million tonnes of food is wasted every year. Sometimes products in the store are past their expiration date, but still very much edible. Jon Barfoot of Barfoots of Botley believes there are trends that respond to this, and that can ensure less food will be thrown away. For the production of juices, for instance, lower quality fruit and vegetables can also be used. That applies to the production of stews as well. Jon explains that when marketing is improved, bags with cheaper quality fruit and vegetables can still sell well in the supermarket.



Improving shelf life through packaging The shelf life of products has a big influence on food waste. The packaging industry can definitely play a big part in improving this. One development in response to this, is laser micro perforated foil. This system measures the amount of oxygen needed by a product, adjusting the number of holes to be perforated to that. By giving the packaging the optimum amount of oxygen, the product's shelf life is extended. Ultrapak, a packaging specialist that is also actively looking for solutions to combat food waste, has entered into a partnership with the PerfoTec's Respiration Control System for fresh fruit. EasyLid is added to the micro perforated foil, making it possible to reseal the packaging.



Vacuum Last year, moreover, their TenderPac was a finalist in De Gouden Noot 2014, the world's most competitive packaging innovation contest. TenderPac was developed by Ultrapak, in conjunction with Naber Plastics and Sealpac. By including the TenderPac vacuum reservoir in the packaging, liquid and residual gases are conducted away from the product, which significantly extends shelf life. In beef, the shelf life increases by at least 30 to 40 days. TenderPac, Peter Roorda of Ultrapak says, can also be applied in fruit and veg, the fishing industry and the poultry sector. The TenderPac system comes in three varieties: skin packaging on tray sealing machine, flexible foil vacuum packaging on thermoformer, and the new skin packaging on thermoformer.