

Title Food wastage and its reduction through packaging
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Abstract

Aspects of climate change and rising food prices have been major drivers behind a recent wave of pressure to reduce food waste. The increased energy cost, closely related to food production, packaging and transport is another strong factor behind increased awareness of wasted resources. Agricultural commodity prices jumped to a record high this year, triggering food riots in many places the price of corn, wheat and rice has since then tumbled between 40 and 60% from the all-time highs. But the FAO warned, in its biennial Food Outlook report, against a “false sense of security”. Supply of agricultural commodities can change swiftly year-on-year as farmers react to prices, demand and credit availability. Also, food production and consumption has a larger share in the emission of greenhouse gases. According to WARP, this accounts e.g. in UK for almost 20% of the annual greenhouse gas emissions. This [P] project aims to structure and substantiate facts about food waste within Europe, with special emphasis on relevant aspects for flexible packaging. The project has covered four major waste contributing segments in the packed food supply chain, where quantification and qualification of relevant waste has been done. The results show that the biggest share of waste, after the product has been packed in its consumer packaging, is coming from the households, where consumers in average throw away around 1/3 of the food that is brought home. A major conclusion in the study is that there are possibilities and incentives to decrease the food waste in all steps of the food supply chain. A better knowledge about where waste occurs and why it happens increases the potential to reduce waste. The packaging plays a key role in the ambition to reduce food wastage and is an essential part of the solution. Development is needed in many areas, but in others just sensible modifications could make a big difference. It is worth underlining that packaging is not produced as a good in itself but as a tool to allow the best distribution, sale and use of goods while meeting consumer expectations for produce protection, safety and information. This study shows where the potentials for improvements are.