

Food Industry Alliance Releases Toolkit to Reduce Food Waste

WASHINGTON (PRNewswire-USNewswire) — Today an alliance of food manufacturers, retailers and foodservice operators announced the release of a toolkit to help businesses in the food sector reduce the amount of food waste sent to landfill. The [Best Practices and Emerging Solutions Toolkit](#) [1] was produced by the Food Waste Reduction Alliance (FWRA), a cross-sector industry initiative led by the [Food Marketing Institute](#) [2] (FMI), the [Grocery Manufacturers Association](#) [3] (GMA) and the National Restaurant Association (NRA).

"The Food Waste Reduction Alliance has been working to tackle food waste challenges within the food sector since 2011, but we know that there are companies out there that are just starting to look at the issue," said Gail Tavill, vice president, sustainable development for ConAgra Foods and one of the toolkit authors. "Our goal for the toolkit is to elevate the issue of food waste within the sector and enable more companies to take action by sharing key learnings and model practices gleaned from organizations who are at the leading edge of this issue."

Approximately 80 billion pounds of food waste are discarded in U.S. landfills each year. The majority of food waste is generated at the residential level, but it can also be a byproduct of manufacturing, retail and foodservice operations. The FWRA toolkit focuses on strategies food manufacturers, retailers and foodservice operators can employ to keep food out of landfills, and to reduce food waste at the source.

"The sad truth is that while food is going to waste, 37 million Americans struggle to put enough food on the table to feed their families. The safe, edible food that is diverted from the waste stream to food banks through model practices showcased in the toolkit make a positive social impact on communities across the country by providing sustenance to those in need," shared Karen Hanner, director of manufacturing product sourcing at Feeding America, and a key contributor to the toolkit.

The model practices and emerging solutions were compiled from the more than 30 FWRA member companies that are focused on reducing food waste within their operations. Specific topics discussed include:

- Tactics for overcoming obstacles to food donation such as supply chain issues
- Emerging solutions and new technologies for recycling food waste, including energy production opportunities
- Strategic planning to avoid food waste generation

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Published on Food Manufacturing (<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com>)

The toolkit also offers a "Getting Started" section for companies that are just beginning to consider food waste reduction strategies. Conducting a waste characterization assessment, establishing standard operating procedures and developing collaborative relationships with partners from the anti-hunger community, waste management providers and other stakeholders are among the starting points outlined.

Numerous real-life examples and case studies of the approaches discussed are found throughout the Best Practices and Emerging Solutions Toolkit.

"One of the most valuable features of the toolkit is that it includes examples and insights from companies that illustrate the strategies outlined. What's more, the alliance recognizes that there are operational differences between food manufacturers, retailers and foodservice companies, so there are case studies that speak to the unique concerns and challenges of each sector," noted Jason Wadsworth, sustainability coordinator for Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. and toolkit co-author.

"FWRA members are committed to reducing food waste not just within their own organizations, but across the entire food sector. By sharing our collective experience, we hope to enable other companies to tackle food waste more efficiently and more effectively than when we started the process," said Brandon Tidwell, sustainability manager with Darden Restaurants and toolkit co-author. "The more companies that join the effort, the faster we can change the social acceptability of wasting food."

For a copy of the FWRA Best Practices and Emerging Solutions Toolkit, please visit the FWRA web site at www.foodwastealliance.org. [4]

Source URL (retrieved on 01/27/2015 - 8:18am):

<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/04/food-industry-alliance-releases-toolkit-reduce-food-waste>

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- [1] http://www.foodwastealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/FWRA_Toolkit_FINAL_0415141.pdf
- [2] https://twitter.com/FMI_ORG
- [3] <https://twitter.com/GroceryMakers>
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