

WASHINGTON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION PLANNING PROCESS

Food Business Subject Matter Expert Work Group Meeting

Wednesday 9/18/19 10AM - 12PM

SUMMARY MINUTES

Participants:

- Bob Zak – Recircle Software
- Cat Holm – WA Food Industries
- Damien Davis – Downtown Pasco Development Authority
- Deb French – Dairy Farmers of WA
- Katie Doyle – WA Hospitality Association
- Katie Rains – WA State Department of Agriculture (work group convener)
- Mary Harrington – WA Department of Ecology
- Ranie Haas – WA State Tree Fruit Association
- Srirup Kumar – Impact Bioenergy
- Steve Lacy – Fred Meyer

Meeting Summary

- **Overview of Stakeholder Engagement**
 - Convener acknowledged that food businesses have already been doing a lot to reduce wasted food and food waste – state plan writers hope to learn as well as share during this process. The plan process is to meet with the 5 SME groups, then write, then meet, then write – to write the plan as we go, not have a big write-up session after the meetings are done. Goal is to have draft plan done by May so there is time for ample feedback from stakeholders. Presented statistics on hunger, greenhouse gas emissions due to wasted food, resources, and that the list of stakeholders will be added to the planning webpage (reminded people to let us know if they don't want their name on the webpage, though all minutes will include a list of attendees and all participants' names will be disclosed if asked since these are public meetings.
- **Overview of Food Waste Reduction Plan Format**
 - Shared proposed plan format (hard copy example provided) with recommendations grouped in phases 'easy, harder, and hardest.'
 - We are following the Food Waste and Recovery hierarchy: (Prevention) Source Reduction, (Rescue) Feed People, and (Recovery) Feed animals, composters, anaerobic digesters.
 - HB 1114 requires recommendations on:
 - Stable Funding
 - Avoiding adding burdens to Hunger Relief organizations
 - Providing technical support
 - Developing K-12 education

- Best Management Practices (BMP's) for local solid waste management plans
 - Provide recommendations for legislative changes by Dec 2020
- **Initial Questions/Concerns/Comments from Participants**
 - Do we have contacts within the WA State Farmers Market Association – Katie said she had reached out and will follow-up to get data about direct farm donation to hunger relief.
 - Key concern centers on food safety and local control. State-based development of the retail food code with county-based interpretation and regulatory authority is an ongoing challenge for food donation regulation from a food safety perspective. This concern was echoed by several and indicated that disparate county interpretation can be a huge barrier to food donation. Food donation standards in Oregon are consistent and predictable because the state is the regulatory authority. Suggestion to explore a grouping or special exemption for food donation purposes, and possible incentives, too.
 - Date marking for prepared foods is in the new retail food code.
 - Feeding America has time & temp requirements which retail businesses can work with and feel confident in safety requirements and food integrity, but smaller more rural hunger relief agencies may have trouble meeting those requirements.
 - Portland made some changes to food donation regs to increase prepared food donation opportunities. Due to these changes, Bon Appetite was able to donate prepared food leftover from events directly to missions and meal programs. This pushed Bon Appetite to make internal changes like weighing food to produce less donations (example of source reduction) (2013 USDA champion). It was a real eye-opener for BA – led to reduction. Portion control was found to biggest lever in reducing food waste at BA. Smaller portions led to less waste. Plate size didn't make much impact. Also led to more sourcing of local food whenever possible. Farmers want to donate more to schools, but regs make it super burdensome.
 - Trade disruptions are impacting tree fruit growers; labor restrictions are also an issue but there is not an overall awareness or concern that crops are being left unharvested.
 - Dairy farmers give money to schools for milk dispensers, known as "silver cows" and suggested policy changes such as recess before lunch so kids are hungry and not pressed to get outside to play after they eat lunch, as well as longer lunch periods. Dairy farmers support educational outreach and they also provided rebate programs for refrigerators at food banks for donated milk.
 - What metrics will be used to calculate "success" in this plan? – Right now everything is based on pounds of food, but greenhouse gas emissions may enter the assessment picture: "Impact Reporting"
 - Kroger/Fred Meyer has a Zero Waste/Zero Hunger initiative. Kroger uses calculations to translate donation pounds into number of meals; public

facing education in stores; tracking food donated by categories – Steve to share these categories with group. They also have anaerobic digesters in California and in the Eastern US, but not in WA.

- Noted the retail “battle” between shrink – which is wasted product, loss of product, loss of profit, and donations. This tension is about perception. Donation inherently represents a loss of profit, but still seen as a good thing within the company. Progress toward Zero Hunger goal is the measure of success; simply show improvement. It's a lofty goal.
- Suggestion that we look at parallels in the process used to track energy consumption – the process they used to measure consumption.
- Stores in Mount Vernon have launched programs that enable them to use would-be-wasted-food to make new prepared food to sell or donate. They invite customers to purchase a \$1 or \$2 certificate, and the store provides a prepared food meal to someone in need (they just come in and ask if there are certificates available).
- At whole foods and PCC, 95% of would-be wasted food is being re-used.
- Some fresh produce is being wasted due to limited access – SNAP at Farmers Market, but many counties have no SNAP CSA options.
- Opportunities include partnerships between for-profit businesses that can re-package school meals and turn them into take home meals for hungry kids. School system requirements can be prohibitive.
- Develop a plan for food safety consumer education – likened “wishful” recycling to “wishful” food donation; unacceptable items in the system have harmful impacts that reduce the total amount of recycled materials or redistributed foods by contamination. Be sure to educate consumers about what to do if/when food cannot be safely donated.
- Caution – be sure not to produce a quota system for food donation.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Katie to follow-up with Farmers Market Association for food donation data
2. Steve to share categories for food donation currently tracked by Kroger
3. Mary to share 2016 Food Waste Characterization Study

Send questions or corrections to Katie Rains, krains@agr.wa.gov, 360-688-4549

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday November 20th, 10AM-12PM
WSDA 1111 Washington St NE, Olympia, WA 98504

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/934895277> OR
Call in: [\(669\) 224-3412](tel:6692243412), Access Code: 934-895-277

Department of Ecology Food Waste Reduction Plan Website:

- <https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-recycling-waste/Organic-materials/Food-waste-prevention/Food-waste-plan>