

**European Union of Women**  
**Food Agriculture and Consumer Commission**  
**Erica Bargman and Aphrodite Bletas, Commission Vice Chairmen**

**(1)Topic : Food Waste – Food Ethics**  
**(2) Horsemeat scandal**

**(1) Food waste-food ethics. Some questions to help us compare the situation across the Europe**

Food Waste can be impacted at many levels throughout the cycle, as the table below indicates:

Areas where waste occurs	Examples of the Issues	UK Facts & figures	Equivalent in your country
Farming & fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Crop production - impact of disease and drought</li> <li>◆ 'Acceptable' specification</li> <li>◆ Market demand</li> <li>◆ Use of waste products such as too small fish in a catch or wrong sized carrots</li> </ul>	<p>2.3 million tonnes of fish discarded in the North Atlantic and the North Sea each year;</p> <p>An estimated 20 to 40% of UK fruit and vegetables rejected even before they reach the shops - mostly because they do not match the supermarkets' excessively strict cosmetic standards.</p> <p>Between 2 and 500 times more carbon dioxide can be saved by feeding non-meat food waste to pigs rather than sending it for anaerobic digestion (the UK government's preferred option). But under European laws feeding food waste to pigs is banned..</p>	<p>40 to 60% of all fish caught in Europe are discarded - either because they are the wrong size, species, or because of the ill-governed European quota system.</p> <p>In Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, by contrast, it is mandatory to feed some food waste to pigs            In Spain Fish is the Spanish diet!! There is a scheme to reduce discarded fish.</p>
Manufacture & Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Excessive packaging</li> </ul>	<p>Food Industry has a voluntary code of conduct (the Courtauld Commitment). In phase one in 2010 there was a reduction of 270,000 tonnes from 2008 by smaller portion sizes, re-sealable packaging, better food handling in shops – stock rotation            Target is to further reduce waste by 4% in 2012.</p>	<p>In Switzerland packaging is excessive both for food and for gift wrapped presents producing unrecycleable paper waste.</p> <p>In Greece there is regulation for:            More flexible packaging.            Incentives to compost wasted or rotten food products.</p>

Retailing & Catering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Specification</li> <li>◆ Encouraging over consumption eg 'Buy one get one free'</li> <li>◆ Sell by and use by dates</li> </ul>	<p>600,000 tonnes of food waste sent to landfill by catering establishments – 66% could have been eaten</p> <p>200,000 tonnes of used veg.cooking oil is generated every year – it mainly ends up in landfill or down drains</p>	
Consumer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Low awareness of impact of our over consumption</li> <li>◆ Less home cooking, more ready meals</li> <li>◆ Extra purchasing also increases waste</li> </ul>	<p>8.3 million tonnes of food and drink thrown away each year, of which 5.3 million tonnes is avoidable. 2.9m is left &amp; unused, and 2.2m is due to preparing too much</p> <p>This is equivalent of £11.5 billion wasted - £480 for every household, and £680 in families with children</p> <p>24 to 35% of school lunches end up in the bin.</p> <p>Yet 84% of people believe they hardly ever throw food away...</p> <p>The bread and other cereal products thrown away in UK households alone would have been enough to lift 30 million of the world's hungry people out of malnourishment.</p>	<p>In Spain plastic bags are rarely used in shops. Excess food goes to people in need. More than 1.5million go hungry today in Spain.</p>
Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Waste food (eg vegetable peelings) is no longer recycled into animal feed</li> <li>◆ Recycling of food waste as well as other recyclables in</li> </ul>	<p>Of the food thrown away by households, 10% goes to composting or feeding their animals. 26% down drains, and local authority collect 64%</p> <p>Local Authorities pay a <b>landfill tax</b> which has gone up for £56/tonne to £80 per tonne. The % composted was only at 44%, now likely to increase as this cost is focused on.</p>	

## **(2) Horsemeat Scandal**

Following the disclosure of the horsemeat scandal across Europe, the source of our food throughout the food chain, is paramount. Traceability is essential for every animal destined for food consumption. In Britain it is reported that the Government are testing DNA in processed meat products and finding horsemeat is present. Horsemeat does not have the same traceability as beef cattle as, apparently, not all the veterinary products administered are recorded. The British supermarket Tesco's has said that they will bring their suppliers closer to home.

It appears that mechanically recovered meat for sausages has been renamed to avoid the new regulation that de-sinewed meat can no longer be used for sausages.

At the end of February it was reported that in Greece the public prosecutor ordered the financial police to proceed to an inquiry as to whether parcels of horse meat have reached Greece. At the same time the FDA and the veterinary services of the Ministry of Agriculture engaged in DNA controls of beef meat parcels entering the Greek market to make sure that no horse meat is hidden beneath. These controls are expected to last for a month. Four DNA samples have proven infected to date

Erica Bargman, Commission Vice Chairman [rudgwickorganic@btconnect.com](mailto:rudgwickorganic@btconnect.com)

Aphrodite Bletas Commission Vice Chairman [bletalaw@ath.forthnet.gr](mailto:bletalaw@ath.forthnet.gr)