

Topical Documentation Service:

The topical documentation service **SAVE FOOD – Figure of the Month** provides regular information on the latest data and findings in matters of food loss and food waste. Each issue highlights a selected focal area. This service is provided by the SAVE FOOD Initiative.

SAVE FOOD – Figure of the Month April

45% of the fruit and vegetables produced worldwide are not consumed but **lost**. With the exception of roots and tubers there is no other food segment where the losses are so high on an international scale. Be it kiwi, mango or carrots, almost half the crops growing on pastures, plantations and farms never reach the consumer. They go bad, rot or are thrown away because they do not (or no longer) live up to certain retail criteria. 45% of global production roughly corresponds to **3.7 trillion apples**.¹ By comparison, the annual apple consumption of all German inhabitants amounts to some 11.5 billion.²

Alongside adverse weather conditions during growing or delayed harvesting storage and transport are among the biggest risk factors when it comes to fruit and vegetable losses. To the tune of 40% of all foodstuffs perish in threshold and development countries immediately after being harvested. On a global scale the proportion of food turning unfit for human consumption during transport and distribution is as high as one fifth.³

This problem can be solved by using relevant packaging and transport solutions – for instance, special transport containers. These make it possible to significantly extend the 45-day shelf life by subjecting the foodstuffs to artificial “hibernation”. This is achieved thanks to new technologies such as air-control systems in the containers. They lower the oxygen content in the air thereby delaying the maturing process as they do with a sophisticated room temperature management.⁴

Another illustrative example for minimising fruit and vegetable losses comes care of XCOM Africa, the business consultants specialising in Africa and partner of the SAVE FOOD Initiative. Roughly one third of the mango harvested in East African Kenya goes to waste because there is a lack of processing and packaging capacities. At the same time, the international demand for mangos is high and domestic demand is growing, too. To efficiently tap into this growth potential XCOM Africa has worked out a dedicated programme for local mango processing that enables producers to benefit from higher added value. This programme is now to be implemented shortly with various project partners in Kenya. It contributes to reducing losses since more fruit can be processed with the help of the appropriate processing technology – especially the fruits no longer fit for immediate consumption or those which would not survive a longer transport.

Explaining the underlying idea Marc Zander, CEO of XCOM Africa, says: “Even small steps against food losses can produce a major

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impact on the food supply chains of African states. So far products often do not even get to the people due to a number of problems. What we need is local tailor-made solutions such as packaging and transport solutions. Here, SAVE FOOD can provide key impulses and support with its expertise.”

Further details on the mango project as well as on the overall problem of food loss and waste will feature on the agenda of the second international SAVE FOOD Congress in Düsseldorf from 7 to 8 May. *interpack* – the leading international trade fair for the packaging industry and related process industries – serves as an ideal platform here to get industry experts from business and associations together with representatives from political and societal circles.

1) FAO, Global Food Losses and Food Waste, 2012

2) Also see: Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture, Press Release No. 232 dated 15 August 2013; “Mittlere Gewichte einzelner Obst- und Gemüseerzeugnisse” (Mean Weights of Individual Fruit and Vegetable Products), Federal Authority for Consumer Protection and Food Safety, 2002.

3) Erik Høgh-Sørensen, Maersk Container Industry, Keynote Speech “Food Packaging and Logistics”, SAVE FOOD Partnership Event, FAO, Rome, 11.12.2013.

4) Ibid.

About SAVE FOOD:

SAVE FOOD is a joint initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and Messe Düsseldorf GmbH against worldwide food loss and waste. Since the beginning of 2013 the initiative has also been supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). SAVE FOOD seeks to network between the relevant players in business, government and research, encourage dialogue and help to find solutions along the food value chain. Another aim is to initiate and promote special SAVE FOOD projects with support from industry. SAVE FOOD was launched in Düsseldorf in May 2011 with an international convention and an exhibition as part of *interpack*, the world’s leading trade fair in the packaging industry and the related processing industry. As before, experts from business, government and public life will be meeting at *interpack* 2014 on the 7 and 8 May to discuss the issue of food loss and waste. Further details can be found at www.save-food.org.

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