

NYSP2I Helps NY's Restaurant Industry Identify Solutions through Stakeholder Engagement



Challenge

Food is being wasted in restaurants but only minimal amounts are being donated or recycled.

Solution

- NYSP2I and CET designed a stakeholder driven initiative to understand industry needs, identify opportunities, and support the implementation of improvements.
- Through stakeholder meetings, best practices were shared and solutions to help other industry businesses were identified.

Results

- Several best practices were identified and documented including staff empowerment, addressing the largest waste area first, creating plans for donation, and developing systems that are simple and consistent.

Challenge

In the United States, restaurants send approximately 11 million tons of food waste to the landfill each year at a cost of just over \$25 billion dollars.¹ Unfortunately, the market penetration for change is still very small; according to a 2016 report published by the Food Waste Reduction Alliance, for restaurants surveyed, only 4.2% of wasted food is recycled and 2% is donated.²

Solutions

New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I), with support from the Center for EcoTechnology (CET), facilitated a stakeholder-driven initiative to understand industry needs, identify solutions, and grow partnerships within the restaurant industry of New York to affect long-term change. NYSP2I gathered industry experts to provide guidance throughout the process. NYSP2I also benchmarked existing food waste-related resources and hosted two meetings with restaurant operators, solution providers like food waste haulers or food recovery organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to identify and develop implementable solutions to make an impactful difference.

¹ www.refed.com/downloads/Restaurant_Guide_Web.pdf

² www.foodwastealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/FWRA-Food-Waste-Survey-2016-Report_Final.pdf

Results

Restaurants operators and other stakeholders who were involved in the meetings realized an immediate benefit in fostering relationships with their like-minded peers, and sharing insights and challenges in a focused setting at each of the meetings. NYSP2I and CET were able to distill key points from these conversations into a list of best practices identified by restaurant stakeholders to address wasted food:



- Involve and empower employees through:
 - Educating your team on the value of food and making addressing wasted food a part of your restaurant's culture
 - Formalizing processes and training for staff on inventory management and food prep practices
 - Sharing of data and results of reduction, recycling and donation efforts
 - Allowing staff to help identify and implement solutions and incentivizing their efforts
- Improve operations by:
 - Prioritizing and addressing the largest (cost or volume) waste area
 - Creating plans for donation of prepared food that goes uneaten by staff and that is not reused in other recipes
 - Conducting research into local infrastructure options for food rescue and recycling
 - Making systems clear and simple through consistent messaging, signage, bin colors, etc.

Partners



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