



Reduction of food losses and food waste in public catering – an input to improve resource efficiency

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Abstract:

In this study 10 project partners are cooperating for the project term of two years (01.09.2012-31.08.2014). Five caterers (including the kitchens of a retirement home, a hospital, a canteen of a university and an institution for disabled persons) and three wholesalers will be investigated. The aim is to determine the status quo of food waste in public catering. Therefore process analysis and quantitative measurements of food waste are conducted. Moreover practicable solutions will be developed to enable the establishments: • to operate more economically, by saving costs of production and disposal, • to offer their customers fresh meals in sufficient quantity, • to reduce unnecessary and irresponsible waste of resources. The following research questions will be answered by analyzing food waste in public catering: • How much food is wasted in the establishments? • What are the underlying causes of food waste? • Are there differences in the waste rates between the establishments? If so, why? • How can economic and environmental impacts be evaluated? • What are social consequences of food waste? • What strategies and concepts are already applied in the establishments to reduce food waste? How can they be developed further and be transferred to others establishments? • Can the disposal of food waste be optimized? Through close cooperation with the caterers involved in the project as well as the wholesalers, both practical and economically competitive and environmentally reasonable solutions to the problems described will be developed. This is the requirement for a high level of acceptance and hence the transfer of the developed approaches. The results of this study as well as the developed solutions to reduce food waste are likely to be transferred to other establishments of the food service sector in Germany and eventually to other European countries. This research project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy of North Rhine-Westphalia (MWME), Ziel.2 NRW and the University of Applied Sciences Münster.

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