

## 2021 REPORT

Fruits and  
vegetables  
for human  
development:  
let's take action!





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## Welcome and opening remarks

The Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion wants to be our annual opportunity to promote the dialogue on important topics such as the key role played by food aid and social inclusion. Over the years we have addressed these topics from different perspectives and angles.



**Angela Frigo,**  
Secretary General, FEBA



*The topic of food security is interrelated with the sustainability of the food system, and it plays a key role on the international and European agenda. The momentum has been substantially fostered by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has put the food supply chain under enormous pressure and severe disruptions. While the European food system did not succumb to the crisis-related pressure, it has become more and more evident the importance of an easily accessible, affordable, healthy, and balance diet for all.*

The edition of 2019 was entitled [“Dialogue between European institutions and concrete practices across Europe”](#) and we focused on the implementation of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, while in 2020 the theme was [“European Food Banks Federation: competences and creativity”](#) and we focused on the impact of COVID-19.

The UN General Assembly designated 2021 as the [International Year of Fruits and Vegetables](#).

The International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021 is a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the important role of fruits and vegetables in human nutrition, food security and health, as well as in achieving the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).



**130**  
participants



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SESSION HERE](#)



Fruits and vegetables for human development: let's take action!



In this framework, FEBA has organised and attended different events on this topic throughout the year. This year's Annual Forum with the title "Fruits and vegetables for human development: let's take action!" wants to continue this journey. This conference is organised by FEBA together with Italmercati.

On this occasion, we bring together distinguished speakers addressing the topic from different perspectives and also sharing concrete good practices regarding the recovery and redistribution of fruits and vegetables for the benefit of the most deprived.

## 7 September 2021 / ITALY

On 7 September 2021 FEBA together with [Italmercati](#) organised the conference "[Fruit and vegetables for human development: do not waste!](#)" during Macfrut 2021 in Rimini. The last day of the fair, surplus fruits and vegetables were recovered by the Italian [Banco Alimentare](#).

WATCH THE  
VIDEO HERE

## 21 September 2021 / ROMANIA

On 21 September 2021 we participated in the conference "[International Year of Fruits and Vegetables](#)" organised by the Department for Sustainable Development of the Government of Romania.

WATCH THE  
VIDEO HERE

## 5 OCTOBER 2021 / SPAIN

Finally, on 5 October we organised the skill-sharing session "[Food Recovery from Fairs](#)" in Madrid to share the experience and expertise of [FBAO](#) and [FESBAL](#). Moreover, with the claim "Fruits and vegetables for human development: let's recover and transform!" FEBA together with Italmercati was present in Madrid on the occasion of the international fruit and vegetable fair, [Fruit Attraction 2021](#), and the last day of the fair we had the chance to learn by watching the activity of food recovery from the fair carried out by [Banco de Alimentos de Madrid](#).







## Institutional interventions

### International Year of Fruits and Vegetables

The year 2021 was proclaimed the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables by the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly convened on 19 December 2019. This provides a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the important role of fruits and vegetables in human nutrition, food security and health, as well as in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.



**Rosa Rolle,**  
**Senior Enterprise Development**  
**Officer and team leader, Food and**  
**Nutrition Division, FAO**

In terms of their contribution to human nutrition and health, fruits and vegetables are rich sources of vitamins, minerals, and dietary fibre. They are low in fat and a rich sources

of beneficial phytochemical compounds, such as antioxidants. They also strengthen the immune system, are essential for combating malnutrition, and can reduce the risk of many leading causes of illness and death. The World Health Organization and FAO recommend the consumption of **at least 400 grams of fruits and vegetables per day** by adults as a measure to prevent chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity, as well as to address micronutrient deficiencies

But despite these significant nutrition and health benefits, the levels of fruit and vegetable consumption **globally fall short of this recommended daily intake**, with very wide variation in the quantities consumed across and within countries.



### INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

#### Highlights

- Fruits and vegetables play a crucial role for human nutrition, food security, and health.
- Due to a lack of affordability, availability, and knowledge, the global average consumption amount of fruits and vegetables falls below the daily recommended 400g per capita.
- Cultural preferences, marketing campaigns for processed goods, food safety concerns, and a missing policy focus further negatively impact the intake levels.
- The sustainability of fruits and vegetable production is compromised by issues such as intense use of water, land, chemicals, and plastics and greenhouse gas generation from food loss and waste.
- The International Year of Fruits and Vegetables provides an opportunity to catalyse efforts and actions to raise awareness, educate, foster policy making, and develop capacities to support consumption and sustainable production, and achieve the SDGs.



On average the availability of fruit and vegetables across the globe in 2017 was actually slightly below the recommended intake of 390 grams per capita per day. In 2017, the Asian region was the only geographic region across the globe that recorded the availability of adequate quantities of fruit and vegetables to meet the recommended level of consumption. But that does not necessarily match up to the intake of the recommended quantities of fruits and vegetables across the board.

Low levels of fruit and vegetable consumption are linked to the **lack of availability** in many regions, as we have just seen, but also because of **affordability** as they tend to be costly and often consumed in very limited quantities by low-income consumers. Also, a **lack of knowledge** of the benefits to be derived from fruit and vegetable consumption limits their consumption very frequently.

What we find is that, as people become more aware and more educated, they would tend to increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables. Cultural preferences additionally dictate food choices of consumers and very often we find that there's a preference for the consumption of staple foods over fruits and vegetables, resulting in, again, limited consumption.

Fruit and vegetable consumption also faces **competition from processed foods** that are often backed up by very powerful advertising campaigns, and so, there is a need for greater promoting that whole issue of awareness.

Then we have to contend with the **food safety risks** associating with fruit and vegetable consumption, which also continue to be very key concerns – not only for consumers, but also for suppliers of fruit and vegetables, and these are issues that have to be tackled across the entire food supply system.

And then lastly, across many countries, there's a **lack of a policy focus** that is designed to promote the local production and consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Quite often, there is a lot of policies that address the staple commodities but very few that address actually the efforts to promote increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Now looking at the issues from a supply side perspective, we see that our **current linear systems of producing packaging and delivering fruits and vegetables are not sustainable**, and this poses a challenge for planetary health.



*The top four issues that compromise the sustainability of the sector include the fact that the production makes use of very large quantities of water, and then given their high degree of perishability, they sustain very high levels of food loss and waste. Often that waste ends up in landfills and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Then we also generate in the process a number of persistent plastics used in the sector that contribute to environmental contamination, and there is also very often a high level of chemical use in fruit and vegetable production, and that could pose serious health risks to consumers.*



These sustainability issues compromise the condition, the contribution of fruits and vegetables towards generating planetary health benefits by unnecessarily making use of land and water inputs to produce fruits and vegetables that will never ever make it to the most of consumers, to deliver their intended nutritional benefit. It will not generate economic returns for producers and stakeholders involved in their production, and will likely end up, as I've just highlighted, in landfills. Given the potential risk that could exist in terms of food safety with the still high levels of chemical residues, they could also compromise human health.

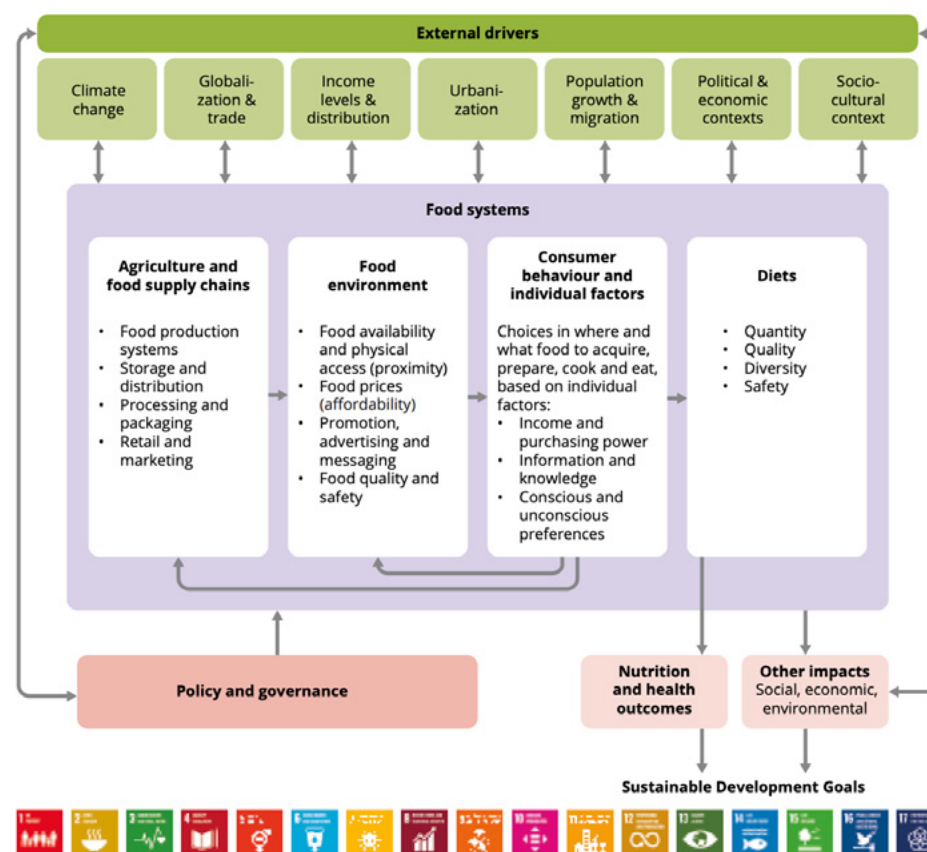
So against this background, the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables provides an **opportunity to catalyse efforts and actions** to transform the fruits and vegetable sector through a holistic and comprehensive approach that looks at the **connectivity between demand, supply, socio-economic development, and consumption** for better nutrition, while shifting to and ensuring more sustainable and circular practices.

Towards meeting these objectives, a global action plan for the International Year was elaborated and agreed to by the international steering committee of the International Year. The plan includes four main lines of actions that bring in a focus on **advocacy and awareness raising, knowledge creation and dissemination, policy making, and capacity development and education.**

The detailed action plan can be accessed on the [website](#) of the International Year.

The International Year also complements several **other key initiatives**, including notably the [UN Decade of Action on Nutrition](#), that runs until 2025, and the [UN Decade of Family Farming](#) that runs until 2028.

**Fig.1. Food systems for healthy diets**  
(Source: FAO)





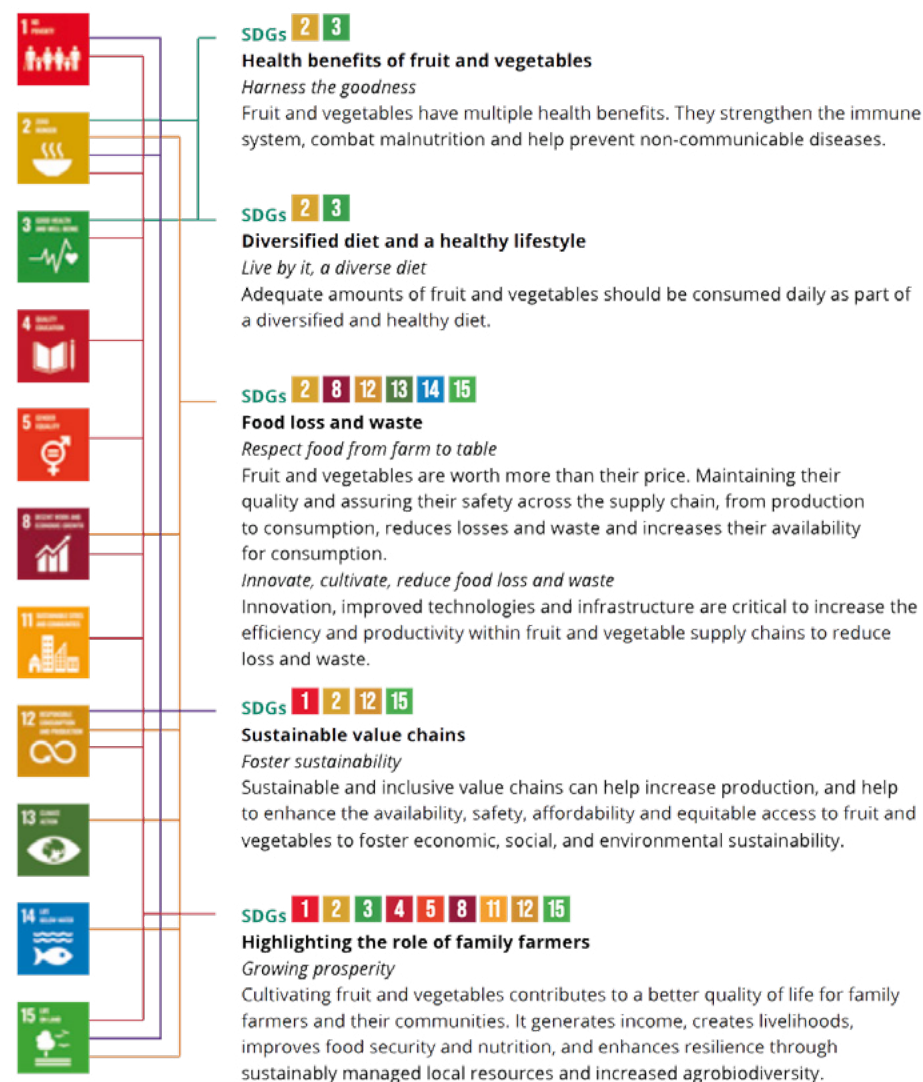
But most importantly, the International Year can also serve as a springboard toward **achieving the SDGs** and it actually links to three key SDG targets: [SDG-2](#) that brings in a focus on “Zero Hunger”; [SDG-3](#) that is focused on good health and well-being; and [SDG-12](#), and in particular [SDG-12.3](#), that brings in the focus on reducing food loss and waste, which is so vitally important from a number of different perspectives.

Since the launch of the International Year in December 2020, there has been considerable **global engagement** to discuss and address the issues through efforts of governments, private sector entities, civil society groups, academia, and research, and FAO has played, from the inception, a facilitating and coordinating role in working with an international steering committee, that has defined the agenda of the International Year.

To support this work, FAO has also launched a **digital campaign** that helps to promote attention to the issues and also to share and disseminate information on all of the various events that are taking place across the globe. I wish to invite you to browse the [website](#) where that digital campaign has been launched to learn of various events convened, as well as to make use of a number of technical resources, videos, and materials that have been produced to promote awareness and to draw attention to the whole issue of fruit and vegetable production and consumption in a sustainable manner that helps to benefit nutrition and health.

The International Year will be concluded in February 2022 with a closing event. And of course, the work that has been started must go on, so we look forward to continued collaboration and contributions from all stakeholders in **keeping up the momentum that this year has generated** toward maximizing the benefits of fruit and vegetable production and consumption.

**Fig.2. Sustainable Development Goals related to fruit and vegetables**  
(Source: FAO)







## Saving food, reducing food loss and waste: EU action plan Farm to Fork Strategy



**Anne-Laure Gassin,**  
Team Leader, food waste, DG  
Health and Food Safety, European  
Commission

It is a pleasure for me to follow on from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Rosa Rolle's intervention – you will see many parallels in what I will be presenting. The European Commission works very closely with FAO in many areas related to sustainable food systems transition. In particular today, I am going to focus on our work to **reduce food loss and waste**, and of course with a focus on fruits and vegetables – a valuable commodity which is extremely important to save from being wasted and to redistribute, as a priority, to people in need.



*The EU has implemented a dedicated action plan to reduce food loss and waste since 2016, under the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#), and as of 2020, we have stepped up our efforts in order to accelerate our progress towards the Sustainable Development Target Goal that Rosa Rolle mentioned – 12.3, to halve food waste by 2030.*

In line with the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), we are aiming to reduce food loss and waste as part of an **integrated food systems approach**. That strategy seeks to establish a sustainable food system that has a neutral or positive environmental impact, ensures food security and public health, and preserves the affordability of food. You will see immediately that all of these areas indeed capture many of the issues which Rosa Rolle raised in her presentation as regards fruit and vegetables.

Turning now to **food waste in the EU**: the most recent data that we have estimates that some 88 million tonnes of food waste are generated each year. Over 50% of food waste occurs at household level; in fact, nearly 70% if we include out-of-home food consumption. Fruit and vegetables are amongst the top categories of food that are wasted today in the EU.



### Highlights

- ➔ The EU is stepping up action to reduce food loss and waste as part of an integrated food system approach put forward in the Farm to Fork Strategy.
- ➔ Main actions include: legislative proposals to set EU-level food waste reduction targets (2023) and revise EU date marking rules (2022); integrating food loss and waste prevention in relevant EU policies, including facilitation of safe food donation practices; continuing to mobilise and support stakeholders in taking action in line with the food use hierarchy.
- ➔ The EU Platform of Food Loss and Waste and the new EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub are key instruments to promote the sharing of evidence-based best practices.



The [Joint Research Centre](#) has analysed the **ratio of food waste to food supplied for different food groups**. In the diagram below, every dot represents one million tonnes, and the red dot represents food waste and, proportionately, there are more dots for the fruit and vegetable category. This is mainly due to the higher amounts of inedible content found in such foods and the extent to which fruit and vegetables can be stored prior to consumption, due notably to their perishable nature.

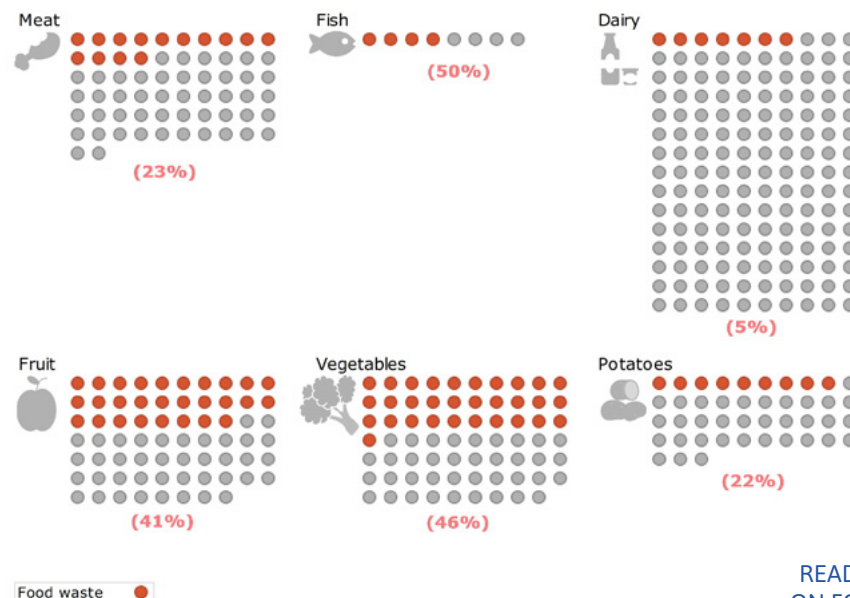
As part of the Farm to Fork Strategy, we want to step up our efforts and accelerate the EU's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3.

#### So what are the main actions?

The two key flagship actions are the planned legislative proposals. The European Commission will propose, in 2023, to **set binding EU level targets for food waste reduction**. These will be targets for the Member States to achieve in order to reduce food waste in the food supply chain.

We will also be **revising EU rules for date marking** by end of 2022. These are the date labels that you find on food products, the "use by" and the "best before date". The "best before date", in particular, is often misunderstood, which can lead to food waste. We aim to adopt a legislative proposal to revise the date marking rules by end of 2022.

**Fig.3. Relationship between food available at the food supply chain's beginning and food waste occurring along it (Source: [Joint Research Centre \(JRC\)](#), [Brief on food waste in the European Union, 2020](#))**



[READ THE BRIEF ON FOOD WASTE](#)

We will also further **integrate food loss and waste prevention as part of all relevant EU policies**. For instance, there are several policy areas that need to be well-articulated and work efficiently and effectively together in order to ensure safe food donation practices. We will investigate food losses at production stage, explore ways of preventing them, essentially through research and innovation. A call for research proposals has been launched under Horizon Europe, with a deadline of mid-February, which is specifically focused on the

issue of food losses. Topic areas include the development and validation of new tools to measure and estimate food losses in primary production.

Last but not least, we will **scale up action and mobilise key players** across the EU to take action, informed action, spurred through the work of the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and its recommendations for action](#).



The [EU waste legislation](#) was revised in 2018, integrating new measures and obligations for Member States related to food waste prevention. The Waste Framework Directive lays down a **food use hierarchy** in line with the waste prevention hierarchy, in the sense that it calls on Member States to encourage food donation and other redistribution for human consumption, prioritising the human use of any surplus food in the food supply chain over animal feed, as well as reprocessing into non-food products.

The legislation also **calls on Member States to provide incentives for the application of this waste hierarchy**, citing as an example the facilitation of food donation. Many Member States do indeed, today, implement fiscal policies and rules in order to incentivise food business operators to provide surplus food and make it available in a safe

manner to Food Banks and other charity organisations.

I mentioned also the need to **integrate food waste prevention in other policy areas**. This can be illustrated with some work that has been done in the recent years on food hygiene. The European Commission adopted guidance on food safety management systems for food retail activities, including food donation, that has been adopted following advice from the [European Food Safety Authority](#).

In line with EFSA's advice, specific amendments introduced into food hygiene legislation in 2021 in order to lay down certain requirements to facilitate food donation whilst guaranteeing its safety for consumers. For instance, as regards **food hygiene for food of animal origin** ([Regulation \(EC\) No 853/2004](#)), an amendment

was introduced which allows **freezing of meat at retail for the purpose of food donation** and under specific conditions ([Commission Notice 2020/C 199/01](#)). For instance, there are provisions to ensure that meat which has already been frozen is not re-frozen. This may sound very obvious, but it is quite important to protect consumers regarding both food safety and food fraud. We need to ensure, when food is made available for food donation, that consumers receive safe and high-quality foods in the same manner as when that food is made available for sale in a supermarket.



*I have mentioned that we have taken a range of actions in the area of food donation. In 2017, we adopted [EU guidelines on food donation](#), which clarify how relevant legislation at EU level, whether that is food safety, food hygiene, or food labelling, applies to food donation. These have provided useful guidance to support further action at national level, and by stakeholders.*

*We ran for three years an [EU pilot project on food redistribution](#), which also sought to further disseminate these guidance, and to map more specifically the policy and the regulatory frameworks existing at national level.*

WATCH THE PRESENTATION  
OF THE PILOT PROJECT ON  
FOOD REDISTRIBUTION







Turning to **agricultural policy**, there are measures in place in the context of the [Common Market Organisation](#) for fruit and vegetables to promote fruit and vegetable consumption, ensuring its redistribution once surplus arises in the food supply chain, and also related educational measures. Under the crisis prevention and management measures, for instance, the market withdrawal schemes prioritise free redistribution of fruits and vegetables to Food Banks, charity organisations, schools, hospitals, etc. over other destinations (i.e. to feed or other non-food uses). Such schemes provide a higher level of financing (100% EU financing) to producer organisations that have recourse to these measures. The [EU school scheme](#) also supports distribution of fruit and vegetables. In the school year 2019-2020, some 19 million children participated or benefited from this scheme.

Moving on, I just want to highlight the role of the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste](#) that adopted [recommendations for action](#) at each stage of the food supply chain, including food donation. Through the Platform, we seek to promote sharing of evidence-based best practices. The Commission also supports actors directly in taking action. Early next year, we will be launching grants for Member States and for stakeholders in the food value chain, to help them both improve measurement and monitoring of food waste and implementation of effective food waste prevention programmes.



Welcome  
to the EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub



*In closing, I wanted to mention a new [EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub](#) that we have launched on the 29th of September, which is the [International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste](#) announced by the UN organisations. Any stakeholder active in the area of food loss and waste prevention can provide resources and news on this digital hub. You will find also a policy area, with dedicated pages for each Member State that outline the measures taken at national level in order to prevent food loss and waste. If you subscribe to the Hub, you also will receive a monthly newsletter – there are over 1,800 subscribers today.*

ACCESS  
THE EU FLW  
PREVENTION  
HUB





## Simplifying the administration of food donations within the ESF+



**Karen Van de putte,**  
**Simplified Cost Options Team DG**  
**Employment, Social Affairs and**  
**Inclusion, European Commission**

**Avoiding food waste and the issue of food donations** are very important topics for the European Commission. To help Member States and ESF+ managing authorities to simplify the financing of this type of operations within the European Social Fund+, [DG Employment](#) included **a chapter on food donations** within a recent [study on simplified cost options](#).

Thanks to the active assistance of FEBA and its national members, sufficient qualitative data was collected in five pre-selected countries. The process to establish a unit cost for food donations consisted in collecting historical administrative data, performing initial

*The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is the European Union (EU)'s main instrument for investing in people, with a budget of almost € 99.3 billion for the period 2021-2027.*

calculations, and assessing the quality and granularity of the data collected and looking at the limitations and prospects for further development of EU-level solutions.

**Data collection** was performed mainly in five Member States: **France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, and Lithuania**. Besides being the most promising Member States with sufficient historic data available within the scope of the study this group also provides a well-balanced set of countries with **different structures of national Food Banks**. Hungary, Ireland, and Lithuania have one single Food Bank that co-operates with other frontline and backline organisations, while France and Italy work with many regional Food Banks that are connected to a centralised network.



### Highlights

- ➔ Entailed in a wide study on simplified cost options, DG Employment commissioned a study, a feasibility check, on developing "off-the-shelf" tools in the area of food donations.
- ➔ In collaboration with FEBA, data collection on costs occurring for food recovery and redistribution was performed in France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, and Lithuania.
- ➔ Although the data set did not permit extrapolation to all Members States, the methodology used can facilitate the further development of unit costs based on historical data by other countries.



”

*In cooperation with the European Food Banks Federation, who helped us to liaise with national Food Banks, – for which we are very grateful - Food Banks and other organisations provided us data on the total amount of donated food within a given period and the total cost of delivering that donated food to people in need. This showed that organisations involved in recovery and redistribution of donated food incur direct costs for transportation, storage, staff costs, as well as other costs such as facilities and equipment, awareness raising activities, and additional costs mainly during the last year and a half concerning COVID-19 related expenditure.*

To ensure that the data assessed concerns **exclusively surplus food**, we asked data providers to exclude data on amount and cost of food donated by private donors during the food collection events, and to exclude data on purchased food through the FEAD programme.

This resulted in a calculation of the ratio between the total cost of delivering the donated food in euro and the total amount of the donated food delivered or a unit cost of 1 kilo of donated food.

Upon further statistical analysis, the study team concluded that overall **the size of the sample was too small** to extrapolate unit cost values for all other countries as initially intended. However, the study concluded that these values represent a good proxy for the average cost for food donations in the five countries concerned.

On a positive side, National Food Banks from these five countries were able to provide adequate historical data to the study team that is needed for the development of a unit cost. The availability of a proven data collection grid, FEBA's familiarity with the process, and insights of the analysis presented in this report should hence greatly **facilitate the further development of a unit cost based on historical data.**

We strongly advise Member States and managing authorities of **ESF+ programmes** to use the method that was developed in our study as a basis to develop their own specific unit cost. This will greatly facilitate Member States in using this type of operations in their ESF programme and reduce the administrative burden of food donation operations.



READ THE  
STUDY



## The impact of nutrition on health during the first 1,000 days



**Cecilia Bartolucci,**  
**Researcher, National Research**  
**Council of Italy, President,**  
**Fondazione Comitans**

Today I am representing the [Fondazione Comitans](#), which is a very young foundation, and its first goal is to **address the challenge of bringing healthy and sustainable nutrition to mothers and children during their first thousand days of life**. In particular, we want to focus on mothers and children living in vulnerable conditions.

Interventions during the first thousand days could have the greatest positive impact on outcomes, but it could also, in case, for example, of **nutritional deficiencies, exert their most devastating effects**. During this



*The first thousand days defines the time from conception to two years of age, and it represents an incredible window of opportunity, because it is the time during which we can maximise the impact generated by conscious actions. In fact, this time is critical for growth and development, since it is a period of very rapid physiological changes and incredible plasticity.*

time occur also epigenetic modifications, those are modifications which occur on top of the DNA without changing the inherited DNA, the sequence of the inherited DNA that we got from our parents. Finding out about these epigenetic modifications, which are caused by environmental impacts and actually start hours after conception, was a major paradigm shift, because it turned out that the DNA is vulnerable.

We can therefore switch some genes off and on and influence the outcomes regarding our health according to our behaviour, and some of the environmental factors that we are exposed to.



### Highlights

- The first thousand days in the life of a child, beginning at conception, are critical for its health and development due to rapid physiological and epigenetic changes.
- Sustainable, diverse nutrition for mothers and children are especially important during this period to prevent noncommunicable diseases.
- Providing a healthy diet and preventing food waste requires a transformation of existing food systems, which, however, should not just follow the linear "from Farm to Fork" approach but strive at circularity by including the "from Fork to Farm" notion – matching production to the real nutritional needs of consumers.

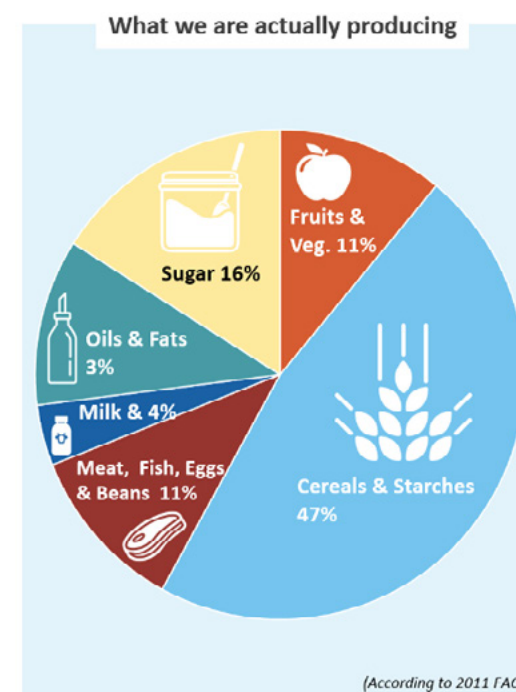
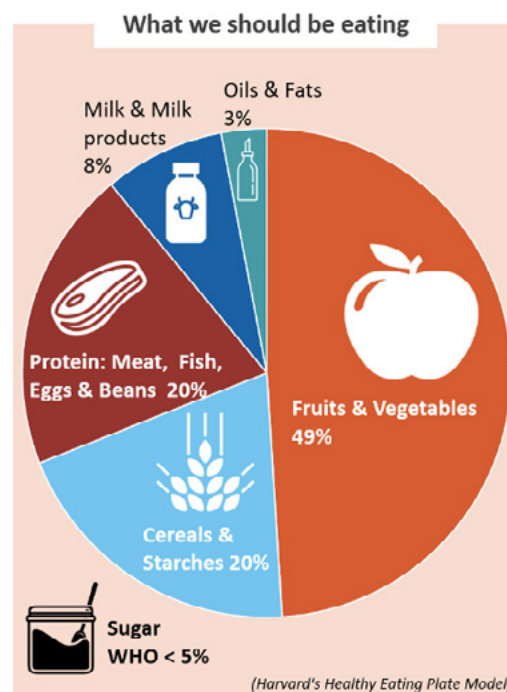


During that time, researcher demonstrated during the past 10 to 15 years that this is also the time, the first thousand days, when our **gut microbiome is formed**. The gut microbiome is the totality of the microorganisms present in our gut and we are talking about trillions of microorganisms, including their genetic materials and their metabolites. They play an important role in the maintenance of health, as well as in the pathogenesis of disease. Hence, both the microbiome and the epigenetic modifications play a fundamental role in, for example, the development of non-communicable diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and even autism.

One of the **major environmental factors that influence epigenome and microbiome is nutrition**. And hence, we understand now the incredible role that nutrition has during the first thousand days of life. We need thus to provide infants and mothers with a healthy nutrition.

That means also that we have to **produce the right amount of food**, and even though we should be aware, and this has been mentioned before too, that there are differences between the nutritional needs due to geographical, cultural, religious, and other situations. A kind of generalised guideline for healthy diet

shows the average percentage of the different kinds of foods that we need, and we can see that we currently are overproducing, for example red meat, and also grains, while we definitely need to increase production on fruits and vegetables.



*We also need to keep in mind that quantity is not as important as nutritional quality. We often provide or we eat what we call “empty calories”, so it is a paramount that we concentrate on the production of quality food of a nutritional quality food.*





This is an important message which we need to combine with the knowledge we have on microbiome. **A diverse microbiome is a healthy microbiome.** We don't know yet exactly what that means, which microorganism we need to have, but definitely, diversity is important.

And in order to have a diverse microbiome, we need to eat and provide a diverse diet, and therefore, we need to support a diversified production. We can see it almost as a street of diversity: it starts from the soil. A healthy soil is a soil that has an incredible biodiversity which helps to produce and provide for, let's say, a production of diversified plants, diversified diet, diversified nutrition, diversified food, that also helps us to have a diverse diet, a diverse microbiome, and all this supports health. So really we can see it as a street of diversity started from the soil to health.

The food system, however, is very complex. We heard about it many times, and we all talk about an **integrated approach**, which is necessary as soon as we tackle some of the challenges which are connected to the food systems. All actions, which take place, in one place will influence the outcomes upstream or downstream of that place of intervention. If we want to tackle challenges, for example, such as food accessibility and food waste – which

are necessary beyond food production – we really need to **see the system as a whole.**

I will give you just two quick examples: one is, for example, the **insurgents of food deserts**, those areas in cities where it is difficult to buy affordable or even quality fresh food, and their number is growing rapidly. We just talked about this the necessity of introducing fresh produces into our diets but if we produce more fruits and vegetables, if we are not able to distribute it everywhere, we're going to leave some people behind. Usually, this is happening in social low-income areas, but this is something that we need to think about.



The other example that I'm bringing is **food packages**. The Food Banks did and are still doing an amazing job in bringing healthy food to vulnerable families, and they're doing so mainly using surplus food, and hence, avoiding waste. This is fundamental to sustainability. Unfortunately, **surplus food doesn't always answer the nutritional needs**, in particular the nutritional needs of mothers and children, and now we know how important that is, how important nutrition is during that time. Many volunteers that we talked to showed great interest in learning how to provide a healthy nutritional package for those families, often, however, they lack the proper products.



Current **innovation** helps to allow for longer shelf life and fresh produces, these technologies should be developed and should be made available to more institutions. I do believe, however, that a radical change is needed in the food system, and I am leaving you now with what I see as a provocative question.

We talk all the time about the concept of “From Farm to Fork” and this is essential. But why don’t we consider also a different approach, which talks “**From Fork to Farm**” too?

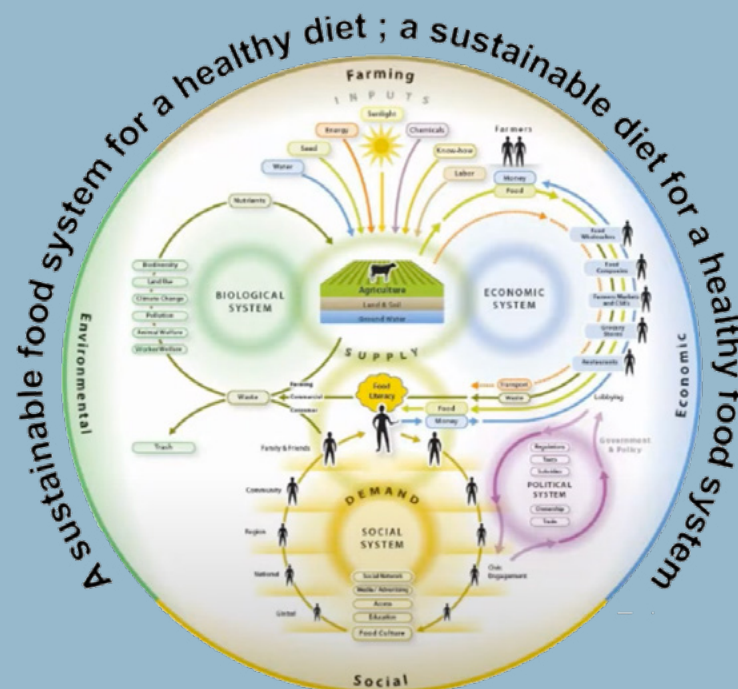


*“From Farm to Fork” represents a linear approach that considers important environmental aspects, but being linear, it is, I think not suitable to represent the complexity of the whole food system as we just described it. If we considered the opposite directions too, so if we, instead of only taking into account the environmental needs, we used as drivers for production and distribution also the real nutritional needs of the people, we would have a circular system. I’m not referring to consumer requests, but real nutritional needs, for example, of mothers, children, people living in food deserts and so on.*

So if we could create this system, create more a connection, and matching the needs to their production, we would maybe be able to also not come up with this surplus that we have, but really only produce the amount that we can distribute, and I think we talked also about redistribution: this is fundamental, but it’s also the production that is necessary. The integrity system would support much more the challenge of providing a healthy and sustainable nutrition to children, for example, in order to write today the health of the adults of tomorrow.

I think this is something that we need to keep in mind: we have the chance and we have the possibility of having healthier adults, having generations that we can support today. Let’s keep in mind this window of opportunity during the first thousand days, and let’s see if we can work together on changing something, moving something, and, as I said, create a system that considers “from Farm to Fork” but also “from Fork to Farm”.

I hope this gives you some food for thought, and I thank you very much for the opportunity of sharing the experience of the Fondazione Comitans.

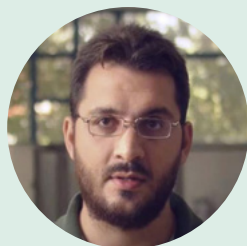




## Sharing good practices



### Food Bank Greece: concrete actions saving fresh fruits and vegetables



**Dimitris Nentas,**  
**Managing Director, Food Bank**  
**Greece**

I would like to begin with showing you a concrete action about saving fresh food: indeed, we **weekly recover fresh fruits and vegetables from the central grocery market in Athens**.

Twice a week, we visit the market in the centre of Athens with our trucks. The project is still in the pilot phase which means that, at the moment, we visit only two specific producers.

We have spoken to them about food waste and how to save more food, and so we pick up whatever they have to donate. **It's very challenging from the logistics point of view**, since we are a small Food Bank: perhaps, one day we may go there and pick up six pallets of products, and another day we go just for a hundred of kilos, and then we need to adjust to whatever they have as surplus to donate to our Food Bank.



*We realised that the producers operating at the market do not really know what food waste is and how to prevent it, and what are the consequences to the environment, the society, and the economy. So, it is also a process about raising awareness to the producers and to the administration of the central grocery market in Athens.*



### Highlights



**Food Bank Greece** is collaborating with the Athens central grocery market, recovering fresh fruits and vegetables every week. For the last three months, 8,200 kg of food have already been saved.



Building a sustainable logistics system and raising awareness are the key elements to reduce food waste; showing concrete actions, such as our project about potatoes, is the best way to engage all the stakeholders of food industry.







Overall, we are very happy since being in a pilot phase it means that we are already successful; indeed, we have persuaded the administration of the market to speak about food waste inside the market, to the producers. We have already persuaded at least two or three of them to donate food, and we already implemented a successful pilot procedure about saving food.



*For the last three months we have saved about 8,200 kilos of food, which is very important for us. We think that in January 2022 we will move to the next phase of this project, establishing a cooperation with more producers and other companies in the grocery market. We will be able to pick up more and more food in a systematic way every week, twice or three times.*

As I said before, it is very important for us here in Greece to persuade the producers, but it is also very important and challenging to build a sustainable logistics system, starting from picking up the food, sorting it out and redistributing it to the charities, so they can prepare meals for the people in need.



[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)

So, I would like to share with you another project about saving potatoes. For the last four years, we have built a cooperation with Westland SA Company, and **we have saved about 500 tons of potatoes.**

I would like to share a video with you for about 60 seconds, just to show you the logistics. We also use this video inside the country to prove to the producers our capability to save more food: in this way, the Food Bank Greece can persuade them to donate food, instead of throwing it away.

Last but not the least, I would like to share a general **raising awareness campaign** that

we released about fresh fruit and vegetables through our digital media channels.

We created some digital banners that we created with a professional partner of our Food Bank. It's a mind game about the word "trofi", which means "food" in Greek, and we combine the word "trofi / food", with "katas-trofi / catastrophe", "dias-trofi / destruction", with "diet", which means "dia-trofi", with "s-trofi" which means "turn". **We play with the words that includes the words "food" and we spread the message that nutritious food should not be wasted.**





## Matsentralen Norge: sorting and packing line at the Food Bank to save more vegetables



**Paula Capodistrias,**  
**Project Manager, Matsentralen**  
**Norge**

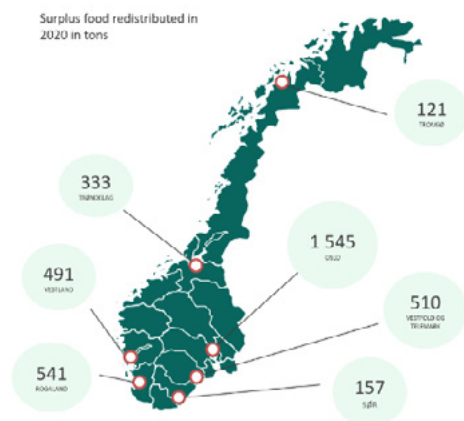
I am here representing [Matsentralen Norge](#), the network of Norwegian Food Banks. On the picture, you see seven locations, that is because these are the figures from last year; but I am very happy to announce that we opened our 8th Food Bank last summer.

The reason I show the figures from last year is because these give a little bit of the background to the project that I would like to tell you about today.

When we looked at the results from last year, we noticed that **a little bit over 23% of all the food that we redistributed was fruits and**

**vegetables**, and today, we have been able to hear about the importance of fruits and vegetables from a nutritional point of view. We know that we should aim to have at least half of the plate with fruits and vegetables, so we decided to do something about this, and especially on the occasion of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables. Consequently, the first thing we did was to ask ourselves: **“why are we not redistributing more fruits and vegetables?”**

Surplus food redistributed in 2020 in tons



### Highlights

- The importance of analysing data to improve the strategies tackling food waste.
- The importance of having the right partnerships and facilities to rescue food from the primary sector.
- Internal distribution of vegetables through the network of Food Banks to increase variety and access to healthy food.



We do collaborate with the bigger distributors of food and fruits and vegetables in Norway, but we did not have so much collaboration with the primary sector – that is, farmers and packing houses. So, this is where we found **our first challenge**, which was a **lack of data**.

Only recently – and when I say recently, it is very recently: it is just last week – Norway published the first figures on the extent of food losses and waste in the primary sector. So, we were a bit lost a year ago in terms of this, so what we did is to reach out to [Bama](#), which is the largest distributor of fruits and vegetables in Norway. It also owns several packing houses, and it has been a very important partner for the network of Norwegian Food Banks since the very beginning of the opening of the first Food Bank in 2013. Bama is also very committed to reducing food waste and has very good protocol for the management of surplus food, hence everything that does not go to the Food Banks, it goes to animal feed. However, what we did is to start exploring possibilities to save some of this food, currently going to animal feed, to be able to use it as human food instead.

And that is where we met the second challenge, that was related to **logistics: we decided to focus on potatoes, onions, and carrots**. These products come, as you can see in the picture, in big palette boxes and they also come unsorted.

We know that fruits and vegetables are biological products, so they are very



dependent on weather conditions and season. Considering there were a lot of different challenges, we needed to find a way to distribute these to families and individuals, following food safety rules for repacking. Therefore, we soon understood that we needed to do this in a professional and safe way – that means having the right facilities, having the food safety routines in place, having the right labelling and packaging, and so on.

At this stage, the [Foundation Sparebankstiftelsen](#) came in. They have a call for projects focused on sustainable consumption: we were very lucky to get funding to start our project to rescue more fruits and vegetables. The funding will allow us to **establish four packing lines in four different Food Banks in Norway**. These packing lines basically assist with the process of sorting out and packing the vegetables in a more efficient matter.



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*Since we launched the project, just a few weeks ago, we have already sorted out, packed, and redistributed 12,000 kilos of fruits and vegetables. Thanks to our internal transport system, we can redistribute the vegetables packed in Larvik, which is the first Food Bank with a packing line, among charity organisations in the region of Larvik, but also in the region of Oslo and Rogaland – so three of the most important Food Banks in the Southern area. We are very thankful with this project, it is a very good collaboration, and we are looking forward to launching at least one more packing line in 2022.*



## Federación Española de Bancos de Alimentos: fruits and vegetables transformation for reducing food waste



**Pedro Castaños Ruiz,**  
**International Relationship**  
**Manager, Federación Española**  
**de Bancos de Alimentos**

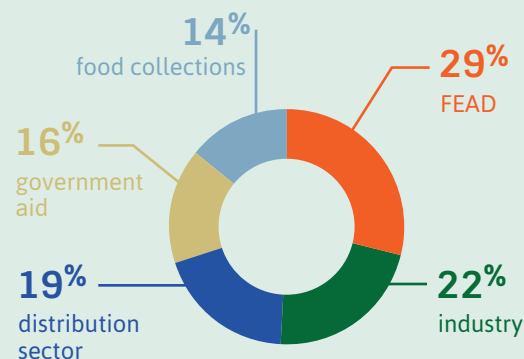
I would like to start giving an overview on what we do with fruits and vegetables.

First, you have to take into consideration that we are a **federation of 54 Food Banks**, which cover all of Spain, which is a big country – so there are many differences between some Food Banks and other ones.



Globally, in 2020, we distributed 158 million kilos of food coming from several sources: 29% comes from the FEAD program, 16% comes from the market received through the Government, 14% from food collections which are very important for us, and then the rest 22% comes from the industry or from the distribution sector.

**Fig.4. Sources of surplus food (2020)**



### Highlights

- The network of the **Federación Española de Bancos de Alimentos** redistributes an average of 40 million kilograms of fruits and vegetables per year.
- Most of fruits and vegetables are withdrawn from the market or donated by wholesale markets.
- The importance of fruits and vegetables transformation: it is not only a matter of packaging but also processing, given that these products are perishable and with a short shelf life. Transformation can extend the shelf life.





So, as you can imagine, some of this food cannot be fruits and vegetables, because, for example, the FEAD programme covers non-perishable food, so only a part of it could be used as fruits and vegetables.

Here you can see, in the last three years, which kind of fruits and vegetables we recovered, and which are the sources.

Globally, the Federación Española de Bancos de Alimentos **recovers 40 million kilograms of fruits and vegetables every year**: 39 million in 2018, 45 million in 2019, and 44 million kilograms in 2020. Consequently, around **30% of the food we distribute are fruits and vegetables**.

As you can see, there are three different types: **fruits, vegetables, and drinks** (we say "bebidas"). Drinks are juices made when we are not able to store all the fruits we have; so, thanks to collaborations with the industry, we transform them to juices, which are then good products to be redistributed.

Roughly **55%-60% of the fruits come from the state, withdrawing it from the market**: when there is excess of a certain product, the state may buy it to maintain the prices for the producers, and then we receive some of that food. We also get it from the industry or from the distribution channels, or even from our national food collections.

Finally, part of this food comes from **our agreements with the fruits and vegetables central wholesale markets around Spain**; we recover food that, for whatever reason, cannot be sold even if it is still good. This is a very important contribution to avoid food waste.

As Federación Española de Bancos de Alimentos, we try to redistribute as many fruits and vegetables as possible, because, as it was said before, we think **it has an essential nutritional value for people**.

**Fig.4. Fresh fruits and vegetables distributed by Spanish Food Banks**  
(Source: FESBAL, 2020)

Familia	Nombre	Estado	UE	Industria	Distribución	Colectas	Entradas Bancos	Totales entradas
28	BEBIDAS	1.419.494						1.419.494
44	FRUTA FRESCA	15.316.930		2.968.646	6.857.090	881.127	528.890	26.552.682
45	VERDURA FRESCA	7.783.854		2.280.905	4.443.367	1.382.087	55.709	15.945.922
<b>TOTALES</b>		<b>24.520.277</b>		<b>5.249.550</b>	<b>11.300.457</b>	<b>2.263.214</b>	<b>584.599</b>	<b>43.918.098</b>
		<b>55,8%</b>		<b>12,0%</b>	<b>25,7%</b>	<b>5,2%</b>	<b>1,3%</b>	

TOTAL KG/L distribuidos 2020	158.745.594
ruta/verdura fresca s/TOTAL distribuido 2020	<b>27,7%</b>

#### FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES DISTRIBUTED BY FOOD BANKS. YEAR 2019

Familia	Nombre	Estado	UE	Industria	Distribución	Colectas	Entradas Bancos	Totales entradas
28	BEBIDAS	2.991.619		3.281.618	1.461.172	476.527	715.397	8.926.333
44	FRUTA FRESCA	14.547.325		1.945.314	5.985.657	183.308	386.239	23.047.843
45	VERDURA FRESCA	8.736.287		981.957	3.039.081	242.111	158.433	13.157.869
<b>TOTALES</b>		<b>26.275.231</b>		<b>6.208.889</b>	<b>10.485.910</b>	<b>901.946</b>	<b>1.260.069</b>	<b>45.132.045</b>
		<b>59,8%</b>		<b>14,1%</b>	<b>23,9%</b>	<b>2,1%</b>	<b>2,9%</b>	

TOTAL KG/L distribuidos 2020	144.551.221
ruta/verdura fresca s/TOTAL distribuido 2019	<b>31,2%</b>

#### FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES DISTRIBUTED BY FOOD BANKS. YEAR 2018

	Nombre	Estado	UE	Industria	Distribución	Colectas	Entradas Bancos	Totales entradas
28	BEBIDAS	3.026.095						3.026.095
44	FRUTA FRESCA	13.904.798		2.253.018	5.435.286	257.069	361.148	22.211.319
45	VERDURA FRESCA	8.041.157		1.837.177	3.615.865	332.258	248.007	14.074.464
<b>TOTALES</b>		<b>24.972.050</b>		<b>4.090.196</b>	<b>9.051.151</b>	<b>589.327</b>	<b>609.155</b>	<b>39.311.878</b>
		<b>56,9%</b>		<b>9,3%</b>	<b>20,6%</b>	<b>1,3%</b>	<b>1,4%</b>	

TOTAL KG/L distribuidos 2020	151.645.441
ruta/verdura fresca s/TOTAL distribuido 2018	<b>25,9%</b>





## Banco Alimentare della Sicilia: Fruit & Vegetables recovery from Sicilian wholesale market



**Domenico Messina, Director,  
Associazione Banco Alimentare  
della Sicilia**

At the end of October 19th, just a few weeks before the European Week for Waste Reduction, we were invited to take part in agreement called “Cuore Generoso” – “Giving Heart” in English. The aim of the agreement was **to recover fruit and vegetables from the Sicilian wholesale market, that is called [Mercati Agro Alimentari Sicilia \(MAAS\)](#), and redistribute them to people in need.**

The first developer of the agreement was the **Sicilian wholesale market**, with the task of involving its sellers to donate their surplus or unsold food and managing the charities inside the market. The other developer was the **local service centre for volunteering**, with the objective of finding **charities and non-**

**profit organisations** to take part in the project, together with the **local health authority**, with a specific task of organising training sessions for volunteers, and **public authorities such as the region, the province and municipalities**, involved in waste tax reduction and supporting the replication of the project in other areas. The agreement was signed on November 19th, and [Banco Alimentare della Sicilia](#) was one of the eight organisations involved.



*The projects started on February 20th: we started to go to the wholesale market twice a week, spending three hours each day; it was, especially at that time, a big effort for us, considering that the requests for help significantly increased from charities, and that we had fewer volunteers than in the past. Nevertheless, we decided to invest in this activity, exploiting the opportunity to recover good quality and quantity of fresh food, and taking the chance to train new volunteers on good hygiene practices.*



### Highlights

- A strategic position of the warehouse of Banco Alimentare can foster the collaboration with the wholesale market recovering a larger quantity of fruit and vegetables every week.
- The importance of working as a network to simplify and improve the operations.



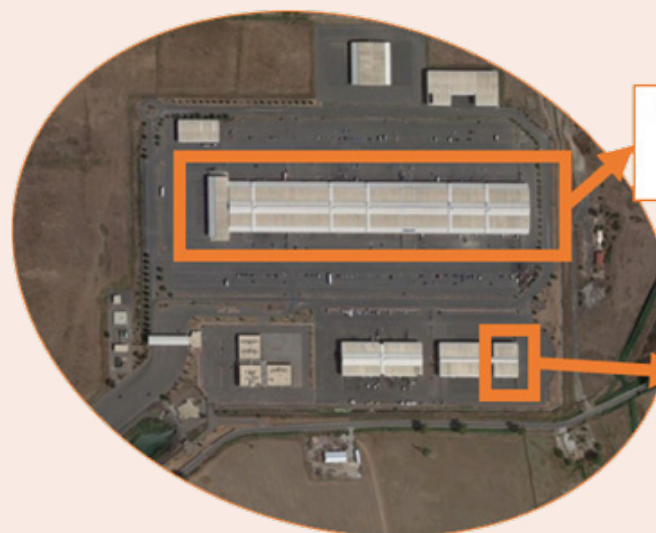
However, there were two aspects that made the process complicated: firstly, the coordination of the charities managed by the manager of the wholesale market (more than one charity per day, someday low quantities of food, etc.); and secondly, the relationship between the donors and the charities.

Most of the times, donors were not able to identify the different organisations leading the problem on the accountability of the entire project.

Considering this scenario, after two months, the developers asked us to manage the entire process of recovering food every day and redistributing it to the other charities. However, for Banco Alimentare the process was unsustainable at that time. The only way to solve the problem was **to move our main warehouse into the wholesale market**, and, in accordance with the network, it is what we did, completing our relocation on September 20th.

#### How has our activity changed?

As you can see from the picture, we are very close to the wholesale market which allows us to **run activities from Monday to Friday, save time, and redistribute food to more charities**, potentially all our network of charities is involved in this project.



**FRUIT & VEGETABLES  
WHOLESALE  
MARKET**

**FOOD BANK  
MAIN  
WAREHOUSE**  
1,650 sqm

#### What are the key factors?

1. From the point of view of Banco Alimentare, moving our warehouse to **a better geographical position**, near the naval port, the airport, the commercial train area, and the highway, we have more space (around 450 m<sup>2</sup>), and we take advantage from the **common services offered by the wholesale market**. From a systemic point of view, we all gain with a **better sustainability**, being more efficient, saving time, and reducing our CO2 impact.
2. **Banco Alimentare is also the only interface between the donors and the charities**: we solved the previous administrative problem, and we can

- recover higher quantities being close to the market and easily available.
3. Finally, **we are implementing synergies with other projects**. One example is the "Ri-Pescato" project: confiscated fish is stored inside the cold rooms of the market, and, after the controls of public health authorities, it could be recovered by Banco Alimentare and redistributed to charities.

Overall, from the beginning of the project, we recovered **145 tonnes of fruit and vegetables**, and we still go on in this direction.



## The example of Italmercati and the 18 wholesale markets members of the network



**Flavio Pezzoli,**  
Operation Manager, CAR

The Italian Law No 166/2016 - better known as Gadda Law – has brought to light good practices, pointing the way to a real benefit for the community. Solving the apparent oxymoron of “less waste, more food for all” has been a great challenge. We, as [Italmercati](#), have already addressed it in its entirety since 2017 with the project “Frutta che frutta non spreca” which consists in recovering and processing surplus food,.

**Let's take action! For us it means achieving the following goals:**

- to recover as much surplus food as possible in an innovative way;



- to extend the shelf-life of surplus food and thus to increase the possibilities of use;
- to enhance the recovery for social purposes of both fresh and processed products;
- to experiment a new transformation model that can use surplus food as raw materials and involve the third sector;
- and, consequently, to increase the skills of the third sector.

### Highlights

- ➔ The project “Frutta che frutta non spreca” managed by Italmercati is in line with the UN SDG 2 as it was created not only to reduce food waste, but also to help the most deprived people and ensure a healthy and nutritious diet.
- ➔ New and modern wholesale markets, able to contribute to the whole supply chain, represent the meeting point between supply and demand for fresh products and perform very important functions such as defining the “equilibrium price” of the final product, guaranteeing food safety and quality, and the enhancement of local, seasonal, sustainable, and organic production.



On the other hand, the “Frutta che frutta non spreca” project is in line with the UN [SDG 2](#) as it was created not only to reduce waste, but also to help the most deprived people and ensure a healthy and nutritious diet. Indeed, fruit and vegetables are often lacking in the diet of people in need. In short, we ensured that the available surplus products were monitored through a digitised system, selected, and partly destined freshly to non-profit organisations, partly processed at the Market, through a newly designed laboratory.

The laboratory is managed by a local non-profit organisation, whose staff is trained by project partners, each one for the topics of their own competence (HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) and good processing practices, safety at work, use of machinery, administrative practices, logistics, etc.). The raw materials used for processing are surpluses donated by operators of the wholesale market and selected by the staff of the non-profit organisation. The finished product is made available to local non-profit organisations interested in using it and/or placed at traditional “social markets”.

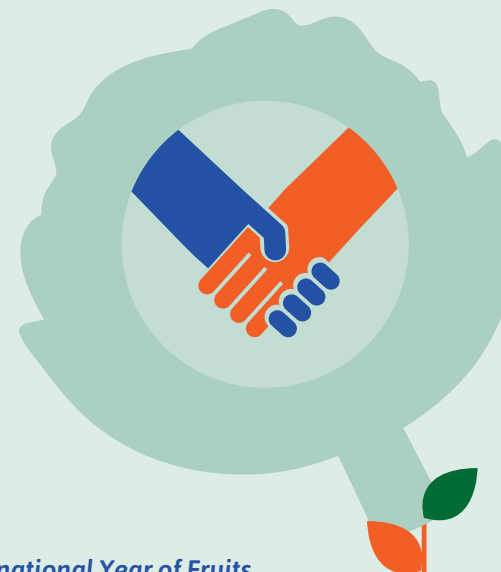
The next step is to make the recovering activity fully operational, and it could definitely enter the commercial market thanks to a measure of the Italian

government, which would allow the sale of the transformed product, although from recovered material, as “fair trade”. We want to increase the level of production by subtracting from the waste circuit an increasingly important amount of recovered and processed material.

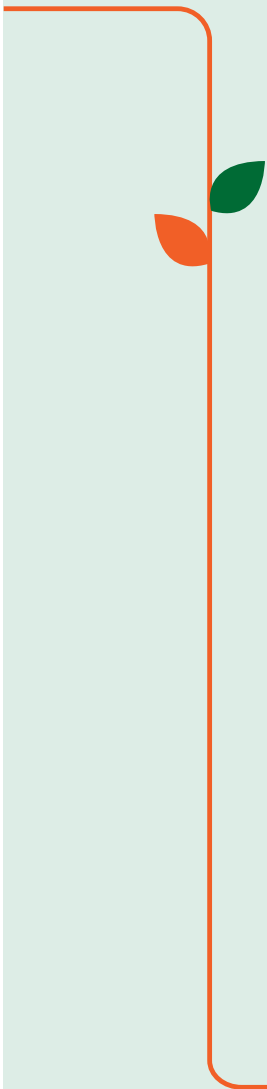
If you think that fruit has a shelf life of one day and after transforming it has a shelf-life of 10/11 months, you can grasp the potential: we can reach a large portion of the poor population, allowing them to buy an excellent product at a very low price.



*The meeting with FEBA to celebrate the [International Year of Fruits and Vegetables](#) allows us to verify that this project is the first example not only in Italy but in Europe. We want to urge governments, not just the Italian one, to identify resources - urgently - to ensure that every large wholesale market in Europe is equipped with a laboratory for the transformation of surplus products to be able to implement that circular economy that we can no longer do without. Fruits and vegetables are the products that, more than others, we can use to try to seize the opportunities of the new sustainable policy.*







On the other hand, new and modern wholesale markets are now of consolidated presence all over the world and undoubtedly contribute to the whole supply chain. They represent the meeting point between supply and demand for fresh products and perform very important functions such as:

1. defining the “equilibrium price” of the final product;
2. protecting food safety and quality;
3. constituting a resilient model in response to health emergencies in terms of last mile logistics;
4. ensuring the transparency and traceability of products throughout the supply chain;
5. enhancing of local, seasonal, sustainable, and organic production;
6. streamlining the activities of goods storage;
7. ensuring environmental and social sustainability along the entire supply chain.

However, all these functions must be integrated with the objective of guaranteeing everyone access to healthy and nutritious food by supporting a production that respects nature. Being sustainable means constantly investing, as we have been doing for years, in processes both inside and outside our facilities (from the processing laboratories already mentioned to the co-processing spaces that some of our wholesale markets have already developed. And without forgetting investments in the waste cycle, renewable energy from photovoltaic parks, sustainable use of water, and packaging that all 18 wholesale markets belonging to our network have already made or planned for the coming years).

It is also thanks to these investments that the Italian wholesale markets today represent a fundamental asset in supporting the governance of the food system, with a constant commitment to tackle food waste. The [EU food donation guidelines](#) have had the merit of putting the world of production, marketing, and the third sector into a system at a European level. A theme on which the wholesale markets – even more so in times of

pandemic – have played a decisive role when the fundamental need to maintain the quality of food for families in need became evident.

During the first phase of the lockdown in just three months, the Italmercati network destined, over 950 tonnes of recovered and donated products to people in need (around 4 million portions). At the [CAR](#) in Rome, as an example, we went from 6,000 tonnes of products recovered in 2019 to 12,000 tons in 2020.

Proper management has ensured that much of the surplus has not become waste. Partly thanks to the processing work, partly thanks to the distribution to families in need. The share of waste went down from 75% to 40% (destined for compost).

To contribute to the United Nations' actions, the wholesale markets intend to make their expertise and professionalism available to help design modern and competitive business models that increase the performance of the agri-food system, shaping the future with respect for the territory and communities:



these are fundamental requirements for a more sustainable food system.

Italy has an ancient tradition of trade exchanges in which the wholesale markets have always represented an important point of reference. Even today, in this difficult moment, wholesale markets have shown that they can be a model for the whole world. A model that is confirmed at European level: it is not a coincidence that the European wholesale markets have signed the [EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices](#) together with the main players in the European food sector.

This is a fundamental agreement to foster the transition towards a sustainable European food system, both for the clear indications and commitments that this Code of Conduct establishes for the food sector, and for the ability to co-ordinately work with all the relevant actors in the supply chain.

There are seven ambitious objectives in the Code of Conduct covering the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social, and economic):

1. healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers;
2. prevention and reduction of food losses and waste;
3. a climate-neutral food chain in Europe by 2050;
4. an optimised and resource-efficient circular food chain;
5. sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth with jobs and decent work for all;
6. sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership;
7. sustainable sourcing in food supply chains.

**We can reach them all. Let's take action!**



## Closing remarks



**Eugenia Carrara,**  
**Secretary General, World Union of**  
**Wholesale Markets**

It is a real pleasure, I am glad to be addressing to you this message today during this joint webinar organised also with [Italmercati](#) – that's one of our members – and I want to address Fabio Massimo Pallottini, that is the chairman of Italmercati but also the Director of the [World Union of Wholesale Markets \(WUWM\)](#): our own congratulations for this important initiative.

It's really nice for us to see that our organisations are joining forces at regional level to fight food waste together, and as you probably know, we have just signed an MoU, a "Memorandum of Understanding", with the Global FoodBanking Network. Hence, this event is for us a proof that we have in all the

regions of the world the same commitment and engagement to work together hand-in-hand on concrete actions and projects to accomplish the **transition of our food system towards sustainability** – which means, as many other participants said, achieving also zero food waste.

Today, globally, around one **1.3 billion tonnes** of food produced for human consumption are wasted every year. This is completely unacceptable.

I think that now it is more than ever time to discuss all these concrete pathways that we have at the local level to foster the recovery and redistribution of fruits and vegetables, and the main points that can be associated with them as it was discussed before by different national European Food Banks, and also by Flavio Pezzoli from CAR. As you know, **fruits and vegetables are among the most wasted products** as they are perishable, and at WUWM we do believe that a lot of our wholesale markets are already doing an excellent work in collaboration with the Food Banks belonging to FEBA and also other networks on this topic, but I am sure that we can still team up to go even further in those countries that are still having some pain points and reach the countries, where we don't have actions yet, together.



## Highlights

- Improving the sustainability of food systems requires a reduction of fruits and vegetables being wasted.
- Wholesale markets can essentially contribute to this transition by establishing innovative food recovery systems in collaboration with, for instance, Food Banks.
- Sharing best practices generated through flagship projects, concerning for example the processing of perishable produce, in combination with accessible funding are promising opportunities to lower the percentage of food waste.





It was said before that an **average of 5% of food waste happens in wholesale markets**.

Today, we have conclusive data showing that this number can significantly change through the development of initiatives. For instance, in the most modern markets which already established systems of food recovery, the share of waste today can be as small as 0.4%, and sometimes dropping to even 0.2%. For example, this is the case of [Rungis](#) and [Mercabarna](#). In other European wholesale markets this average level is higher, and unfortunately reaches up to 12%. We can really see the difference, and I think that all these practices that were presented today show how we can easily lower this percentage.

The concrete case that was presented by Italy – “Frutta Che Frutta Non Spreca” (Fruit that will not be wasted) – and the different examples also from Greece or Spain support this notion. I wanted to introduce another example concerning wholesalers, wholesale markets, and associations: Rungis shows how we can already develop and scale up some initiatives. Rungis is the biggest wholesale market in the world, so last year more than 12,000 tonnes of products were distributed. This is equivalent to 2.4 million meals. As regards the way they work, they have an association within the wholesale market called “Le potager de Marianne”, and this association is in charge of all the relationships with wholesalers.

Their network of wholesalers is approached every day to gather all the food that has not been sold and is still eatable. They act as an intermediary, arranging the logistics needed to deliver the surplus produce to the market. At the same time, “Le potager de Marianne” communicates with the charitable organisations to coordinate the redistribution of the food according to the requested quantities, either for free or at a low cost. Due to limited time resources on the part of the wholesalers, it can be challenging to respond to the individual demands of organisations recovering the food. This is also something that we have to consider, and I am sure that in the future we can collaborate more in this kind of projects.

In any case, I think that most of the initiatives that were presented, show that we have today **clear game changing solutions** that are not that complicated and that have demonstrated that we can drastically reduce food waste and achieve the Sustainable Development Goal related to one of the major aims concerning food: to reduce food waste by half before 2030.



*I hope in this regard that the European Commission will facilitate access to investment to European wholesale markets, Food Banks, and partners located in countries that cannot afford to finance this kind of projects today, like the one of Italmercati or the network of [Mercasa](#), resulting in wholesale markets in some countries reaching 12% of food waste.*

I think that it is possible to achieve improvement in several ways but for this, we need to have funds to set up better logistic systems, maybe have a fixed person working with an income from one of the networks, and also establish the required infrastructure – it can be a transformation infrastructure to make, as Italmercati is doing, jams or juice or other products, in order to extend the shelf life of perishable food.

In any case, at WUWM we are really looking forward to **strengthening collaborations** of course with the European Food Banks Federation, with the European Commission, and with the FAO, in order to **share all these best practices** that our markets are putting into place to enhance the circular economy, respect it, and implement it in more countries to reduce the level of food waste.





## Message from FEBA President



**Jacques Vandenschrik,**  
**President, FEBA**

First of all, I would like to thank FEBA staff and the Secretary General for organising this event.

I think it was a very interesting event in as much as we had two different types of panel: the first one focussing more on policies and institutional aspects, and the second one being more on the practical aspect.

Rosa Rolle gave us a nice introduction to the issue of the importance of fruits and vegetables in the world and reiterated what are the problems – the sustainability problems, the environmental problems, the economic

and social implications, and what is actually needed, or a methodology that is needed, to achieve the SDGs 2 and 12.

Anne-Laure Gassin gave us a good rundown on the considerations entailed in the European Green Deal, as far as the advent of a sustainable food system and pointed out different initiatives taken by the European Union to actually achieve the target, which is the reduction of food waste by 50% by 2030. I sincerely wish that this objective can be actually implemented also at Food Bank level. An important point that was made is that, when comparing the food waste according to the type of food that is concerned, fruits and vegetables are actually the “champions”, by exceeding 40% of food waste, which is a scandal. This is something that we cannot leave as such. The existence and the renewal of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste is certainly an encouraging sign of the seriousness with which the reduction of food loss and waste is on the agenda of the European Commission.

Then came Karen Van de putte from DG Employment of the European Commission, and I think she opened up an interesting opportunity for Food Banks to actually embark into collecting data, applying a methodology,

and trying to define the unit costs for the recovery of one kilo of donated surplus food. Food Banks, in most countries, are operated by volunteers, and I think one of the hurdles that they have to overcome is that most of them are not financed by the government and have to find their own financial resources. If we could sponsor or support the recovery of surplus food and the fight against food waste with a substantial contribution from the ESF+ and combined with the right initiative at local level and at national level, this could actually be a fantastic boost for the fighting against food loss and waste.

Cecilia Bartolucci reminded us of the impact of fruits and vegetables on the first 1,000 days of life, and this is a great reminder to Food Banks on the importance of the quality and the adequacy of food. We cannot only redistribute food; we must also be very attentive to its quality and its adequacy for the population that we serve.

As regards the second panel, I had a double pleasure: the first one is to meet again my good friends Dimitris, Paula, Pedro, and Domenico, and then, also to meet Dr. Flavio Pezzoli.



## Acknowledgement

The second pleasure was obviously to listen to what they have achieved, or certain aspects that they believe important to communicate to the Food Bank community. On the contrary Dr. Pezzoli actually insisted on the macro-economics of the food system, which I think is part of the picture that we need to address.

We concluded with the closing statements of Eugenia Carrara. The WUWM just signed an agreement with the Global FoodBanking Network – that's a great thing – but "global" doesn't mean "global". The European Food Banks Federation in Europe is a separate entity and I would welcome the opportunity to sign a similar agreement with you.

And this concludes my closing remarks. I would like to thank you all, and to wish you a very happy end of the year and a fantastic 2022.

Thank you very much you.

The European Food Banks Federation profoundly thanks its members and the represented 37,016 Food Bankers and volunteers from 335 Food Banks across Europe for their daily commitment and professionalism to prevent food waste and reduce food insecurity. Your constant and tireless activity makes a real difference and signifies a tangible contribution to surmounting the hurdles arising in this demanding period.

Moreover, FEBA wants to take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the European Commission for concretely supporting the capacity building of FEBA and increasing the expertise to ensure an effective and professional food redistribution to face present and future challenges.

Our special thanks go to the speakers of this year's FEBA Annual Forum: Rosa Rolle, Anne-Laure Gassin, Karen Van de putte, Cecilia Bartolucci, Dimitris Nentas, Paula Capodistrias, Pedro Castaños Ruiz, Domenico Messina, Flavio Pezzoli, Eugenia Carrara, and Jacques Vandenschrik. We deeply appreciate that you took the time to share inspiring insights during your very interesting interventions.





Fruits and vegetables for human development: let's take action!



## European Food Banks Federation asbl - FEBA

Chaussée de Louvain 775  
Brussels 1140, Belgium

+32 2 538 94 50

[info@eurofoodbank.org](mailto:info@eurofoodbank.org)



@EuroFoodBanks



European Food Banks Federation



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