

EUROSAI WGEA

Spring Session

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AUDITING FOOD WASTE

How to improve the resource-efficiency
of the food supply chain

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Why an audit on food waste?

ECA Special Report No 34/2016 - Combating Food Waste: an opportunity for the EU to improve the resource-efficiency of the food supply chain

▪ **Food waste has high economic and environmental costs**

FAO estimates of global costs/year:

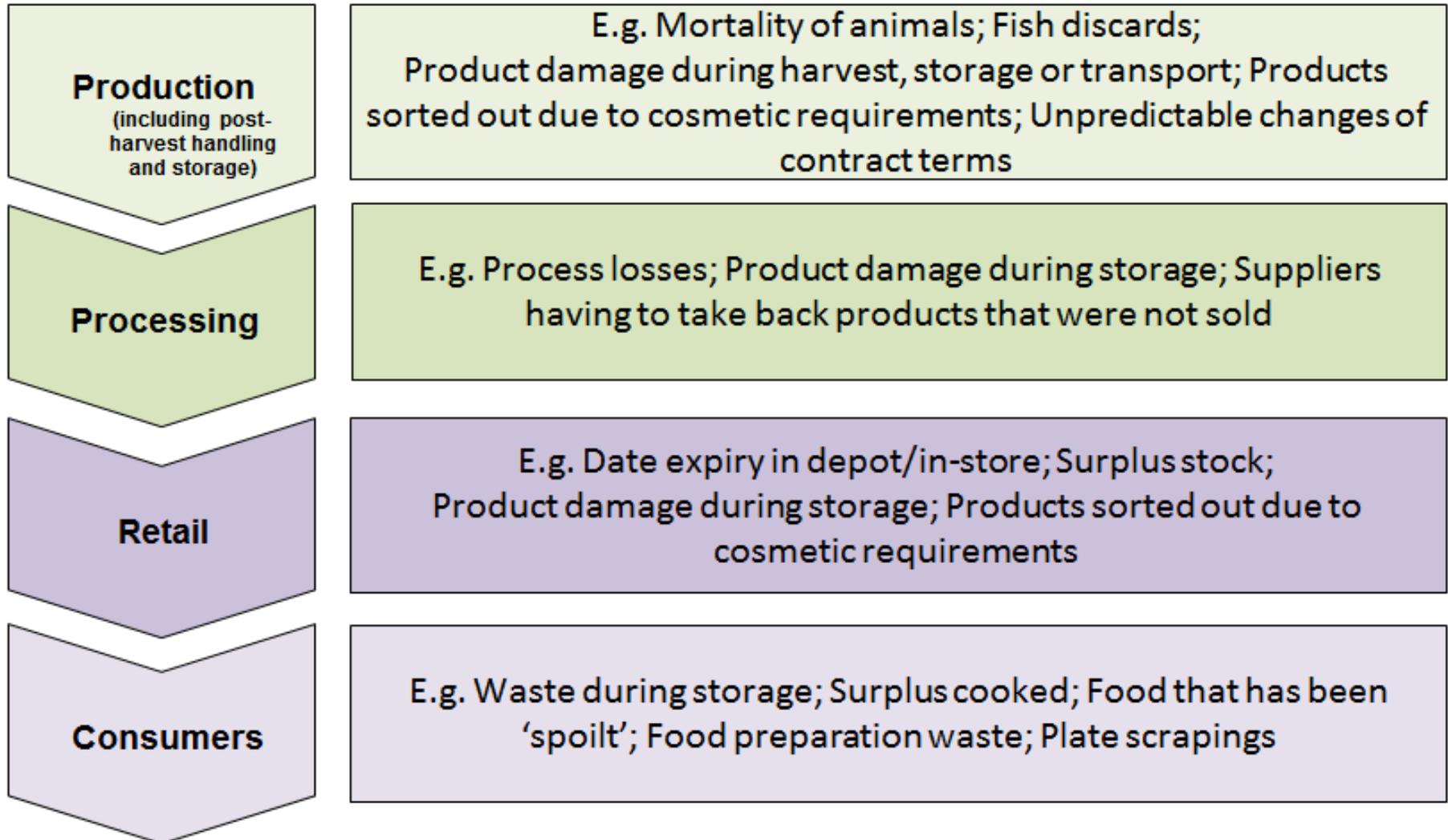
- economic costs of 1 trillion USD;
- environmental costs of 700 billion USD;

▪ **Food waste is a global problem**

- around one third of the food produced for human consumption is wasted or lost
- around 88 million tonnes of food are wasted annually in the EU

Why an audit on food waste?

▪ Food waste occurs all along the food supply chain



Why an audit on food waste?

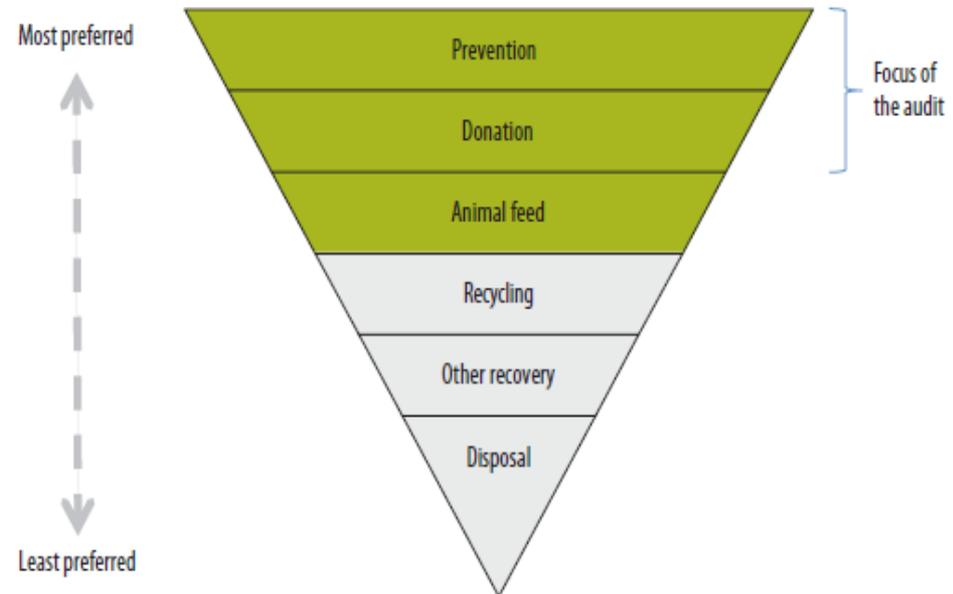
- Many studies and initiatives going on but very few centered on the EU's responsibility

EU has **funds and legal provisions** that **affect the behaviour of all the actors** in the food supply chain

EU instruments which have an effect on the fight against food waste		Food waste prevention				Donation
		Producers	Processors	Retailers	Consumers	
EU Funds	EAGF	X	X		X	X
	EAFRD	X	X			
	EMFF	X	X			X
	FEAD					X
Legal provisions not linked to funds	Waste directive ¹	X	X	X		X
	Food safety rules ²	X	X	X		X
	Labelling ³	X	X	X	X	X
	Traceability ²	X	X	X		X
	Marketing standards ⁴	X	X	X	X	
	(Un)fair trading practices	X	X	X		
	VAT ⁵ and financial stimuli	X	X	X		X

The audit scope and main question

- For the purpose of this report, **food waste refers to:**
“any product or part of a product grown, caught or processed for human consumption that could have been eaten if handled or stored differently”
- Focus on **prevention and donation**, the two highest layers in the hierarchy



- Audit question**

Does the EU contribute to a resource-efficient food supply chain by combating food waste effectively?

Our audit approach

Document review and interviews



- Large amount of studies available
- 6 Commission DGs concerned
- 5 MS visited: Italy (Lazio), the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Finland;

In each of these Member States typically we visited 5-6 different Ministries

On-the-spot visits



- On-the-spot visits to relevant EU beneficiaries

Stakeholders



- Consultation meetings with relevant stakeholders

Main structure of the report

Observations

High level political statements have not been translated into sufficient action

Decreasing ambition in the Commission's strategic documents over time

Fragmented and intermittent action at the technical level

Recommendation 1
Commission

Existing policies could be better aligned to combat food waste more effectively

Alignment of policies for improved food waste prevention

Recommendation 2
Commission

Clarifications and alignment of the policies and provisions for facilitating the donation of food

Recommendation 3
Commission

Recommendation 1

Audit of food waste

Full report on: eca.europa.eu

EU Auditors:

“*EU can, and should, do better to combat food waste effectively.*”



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Why recommendation 1?

- Commission's ambition has decreased over time (*para 28 and Fig. 3 of the SR*)
- limited effectiveness of Working Group and Expert Group (*Box 4*)
- possible action at international forums (e.g. UNECE – *see Annex I*)



Recommendation 2

The Commission should

consider food waste in future impact assessments and better align the different policies which can combat food waste

a) As regards the CAP

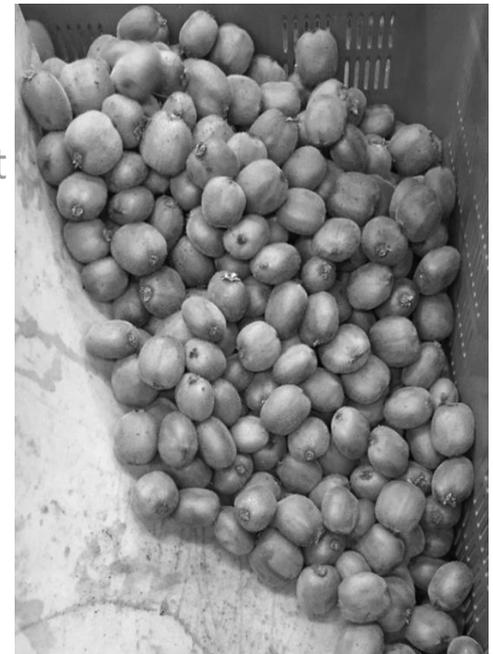
- topic of food waste should be included in the forthcoming review of the policy
- encourage Member States to prioritise the objective of combating food waste when programming future expenditure



Why recommendation 2a?

a) As regards the CAP (*paras 34-51 of the SR*)

- no assessment of the impact of direct payments and market measures on generation/prevention of food waste
- not much use of educational messages school milk and school fruit schemes to pass
- no planned use of EAFRD to fund projects that contribute to reduce food waste (by accident rather than design)



Recommendation 2 ctd.

b) As regards the common fisheries policy

- closer monitoring of the landing obligation
- facilitate the use of available EU funds for investments that combat food waste



c) When developing its food safety policy

- facilitate the exchange of good practices on hygiene and traceability
- as regards food labelling, assess the need to intervene in order to prevent labelling practices that generate food waste

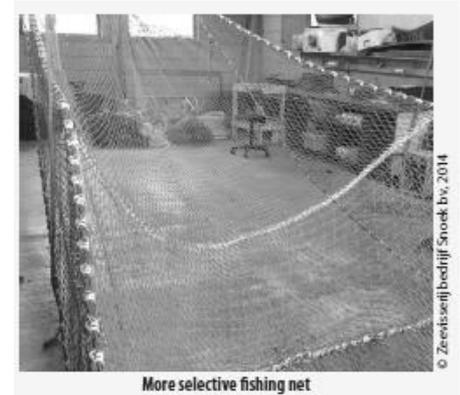
Why recommendation 2 b+c ?

b) As regards the common fisheries policy *(paras 52-61 of the SR)*

- data on catches and discards not fully available
- no planned use of the Fisheries funds to fund projects that contribute to reduce food waste

c) When developing its food safety policy *(paras 62-69 of the SR)*

- insufficient exchange of guidelines on good hygiene practices and on lots identification
- unsatisfactory use of labelling of «best before» and «use by» dates; unjustified differences in the shelf lives of similar products; insufficient consumer awareness of the meaning of both labels



Recommendation 3

The Commission should

promote the option of donating food that is safe for consumption and that would otherwise be wasted

- clarify the interpretation of legal provisions that discourage the donation of food
- assess the impact of extending donation to those policy areas where it is not taking place
- complete the legislative requirement to allow the use of food from agricultural stocks from public intervention
- promote the use of existing provisions for donation among Member States



Why recommendation 3?

a) *(paras 71-73 of the SR)*

- Waste framework directive
- General Food Law
- VAT rules on donated food

b) *(para 74 of the SR)*

- donation of withdrawn fish and of fish that cannot be marketed (e.g. undersized)



c) *(paras 75-76 of the SR)*

- donation of food from agricultural stocks from public intervention



d) *(paras 77-79 of the SR)*

- FEAD
- donation of fruit and vegetables withdrawn from the market

Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?

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