

1755 Food Waste

Passed 15 October 15

Proposer: Helen Mallett (Food Co-Op)

Seconder: Elliot Folan (Geek Society)

Union notes:

- 1) An estimated 250,000 tonnes of food is wasted yearly by the wholesale and retail sector in the UK, despite the fact that all of this waste is avoidable through the redistribution, recycling and energy recovery of food¹.
- 2) In 2013/14 more than 20 million meals were given to people in the UK in food poverty, a 54% increase on the previous year². In 2014/15 the Trussel Trust foodbanks provided enough emergency food to feed 1.1 million people for three days³.
- 3) Earlier this year the French national assembly unanimously passed legislation banning supermarkets from throwing away or destroying any unsold food. Instead they must donate it to charity or for animal feed.
- 4) The Union shop regularly has to throw away surplus food because of restrictions to its date label, mislabelling and packaging damage, despite the food being generally still edible for days to come.
- 5) There are various charities and organisations struggling to provide food for people in Norwich, including Foodcycle, Norwich Soup Movement, The People's Picnic, Norwich Foodbank.

Union Believes:

- 1) Food shouldn't be thrown in the bin, in the same neighbourhood as people struggling to find enough food.
- 2) Food wastage is not only ethically questionable, it is also a considerable factor in regards to anthropogenic climate change, with 320,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions associated with food waste in the UK¹.
- 3) UK food waste from the whole supply chain is estimated to produce >21,000,000 tonnes of CO₂¹. Part of being a sustainable and ethical food retailer is avoiding food waste.
- 4) Increase in dependency on food banks is in large part a result of the current government's policy of austerity, cuts to benefits and sanctions regime.

Union resolves:

¹ (2015), *Estimates of Food and Packaging Waste in the UK Grocery Retail and Hospitality Supply Chains*, Waste and Resources Action Program (WRAP),

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/UK%20Estimates%20February%2015%20%28FINAL%29.pdf> .

² Cooper, N., Purcell, S., and R. Jackson (2014), *Below the Breadline – The relentless rise of food poverty in Britain*, Oxfam, The Trussel Trust, Church Action on Poverty,

http://www.trusselltrust.org/resources/documents/foodbank/6323_Below_the_Breadline_web.pdf .

³ (2015), Press release, Trussel Trust, <http://www.trusselltrust.org/resources/documents/Press/Trussell-Trust-foodbank-use-tops-one-million.pdf> .

- 1) To investigate the feasibility of distributing/offering all unsellable food to The People's Picnic, Norwich Soup Movement, Foodcycle, Norwich Foodbank and similar organisations.
- 2) To investigate the feasibility of using unsellable food for a campus community 'food rescue' (similar concept to foodcycle). These food rescue events represent an opportunity to raise awareness about food waste and sustainable consumption among students and academics on campus.
- 3) To encourage shop staff to offer / continue offering food that is 'expired' or near expiry date at a discounted price or for free within the shop.
- 4) To lobby UEA food services to do the same.