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# The challenges of food wastage to European Society



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# Introduction

- wastage of edible food along the value added chain
  - several studies conducted to
    - find detailed information on the current state concerning food wastage as well as mechanisms behind that behaviour
    - identify, develop and implement proper prevention measures to overcome careless handling of food
- presentation analyses some barriers for different prevention measures concerning food waste

# Example: Legal barriers

- certain marketing standards regulated detailed classification and labelling of food products, e.g. according to shape and size



- only high class products could be marketed profitably, products not fitting into highest classes often were thrown away
- on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 EU cancelled 26 certain marketing standards for vegetables and fruit, instead general marketing standards

# Example: Legal barriers

- reason was “...that it is not senseful to throw away acceptable products because they do not have the right shape”



[www.lippe-news-magazin.de](http://www.lippe-news-magazin.de)

- BUT:
    - no obligation to use general marketing standard instead of certain marketing standards
      - no changes at supermarkets so far
    - 10 certain marketing standards corresponding to 75 % inner European trade volume for vegetables and fruits still in force (e.g. apples, pears, strawberries, sweet pepper, kiwi fruit, tomato, peaches, nectarines, salad, grapes, citrus fruits)
- advantage for producers with direct sale of products

# Example: Economic incentives

- in Austria bread has to meet high requirements regarding freshness
- 2/3 buy bread every second day, 78 % rate absolutely freshness as the most important attribute of bread



Source: ABF-BOKU

- bakeries offer a wide range of different products each day – on average 10 % are not sold

Sources: Starmayr, 2008; Schneider & Scherhauser, 2009

# Example: Economic incentives

- optimisation ordering activities between the headquarters and the branches, awareness building for salespersons,...
- measures with consumer benefit:
  - 5 % discount on pre-booked orders, in order to minimise waste bread and to ensure a maximum of freshness
  - additional piece of pastry for free if the bill is more than 5 Euro within one hour before closing time
  - overall discount of up to 50 % for all fresh products within one hour before closing time

# Example: Economic barriers

- 2005 average household in EU27 spent 12.7 % of household consumption expenditures for food and non-alcoholic beverages
  - great differences between the member states
  - 44.2 % in member state with lowest household income (Romania)
  - in Luxembourg households spend 9.3 % on average
- decreasing share of household expenditures on food and beverages contribute to food wastage, besides other social conditions and trends

# Conclusions

- wastage of edible food widespread phenomenon throughout the value added chain caused by various factors
- stakeholders who have no clear structures and unknown interactions such as households or society, overcoming of barriers is a challenging undertaking
- no recommendation for a specific measure could be given at the moment
- strategy should include a bundle of different prevention measures for multiple target groups at various levels of the value added chain with long-term perspective



# Thank you for your attention!

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