



PRESS RELEASE

A potential £635 million over 10 years could be saved by diverting and redistributing surplus food products to disadvantaged people.

This is one of the key findings of a study highlighting the true benefits of waste avoidance in the food sector and the particular opportunities for surplus food redistribution. The study, undertaken by Integrated Skills in cooperation with FareShare, the national food charity, was launched yesterday in the presence of the food industry's stakeholders, including Defra and WRAP.

The report also highlights that a further **£800 million** could be saved over 10 years through ongoing waste minimisation efforts in food and drink manufacturing.

The production and sale of food is a tremendously complex process. This, along with continuing shifts in consumer tastes, leads to the generation of substantial amounts of surplus food that is disposed of even though it remains fit for consumption. Of the estimated 500,000 tonnes of such material handled by retailers each year, the study estimates that 100,000 tonnes could be captured for redistribution via FareShare and similar agencies and distributed to those that otherwise would eat poorly or not at all.

The report also highlights that most organisations do not recognise the true cost of this waste as, in reality, it includes other values in human effort, capital, energy, raw materials used to manufacture and/or distribute the food products.

The report suggests that the food companies could be incentivised to redistribute surplus foods if they recognised that the true cost of waste is far higher than just the normally quoted cost of waste treatment and disposal.

This report calls for companies in the sector to develop clear policies and systems to increase the amount of surplus food captured and redistributed to disadvantaged people. This positive action would complement the significant strides they are already taking in limiting waste going to landfill. The Government is also urged to take a lead in raising awareness of the issue and work in partnership with charities and the private sector to facilitate the investment required to make this happen.

Tony Lowe Chief Executive Officer of FareShare states that. "Companies are often not aware of the opportunity to 'use' their surplus product prior to disposal as waste. To most companies once a product can no longer be sold and has 'no commercial value' to them, it is treated as waste and disposed of as such. By doing so they are missing out a crucial part of the waste hierarchy 'reuse'. The great irony of this is that using the product for what it was designed for, consumption through organisations such as FareShare, is actually cheaper than disposal. This report provides strong

arguments in our ongoing debate with the industry and the government that 'No good food should be wasted'.

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

The Report "**Study on the Economic Benefits of Waste Minimisation in the Food Sector**" is sponsored by Evolve EB and funded by the Norlands Foundation.

FareShare is the national charity that works with the food and drink industry to redistribute quality food and other food related support services to a community food network of organisations working with disadvantaged people. Last year, FareShare redistributed 2,000 tonnes of food to 350 organisations across the UK and provided a surplus food service to over 100 companies. The food redistributed contributed to 3.3 millions.

Integrated Skills is an independent management consultancy specialising in the planning and implementation of major strategic projects in the UK and overseas in the field of environmental and waste management.

For more information on the report, please contact Steve Burnett on sburnett@integrated-skills.com.

For more information on FareShare or to get a copy of the report, please contact Maria Olesen on maria.olesen@fareshare.org.uk or on 020 7394 2467.