

# Food waste activist discusses dissipation in food supply chain

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Activist Tristram Stuart, renowned for his worldwide fight against food waste, talks about the new French law that bans supermarkets from destroying food: "Good signal, but the real dissipation is in the supply chain"

"Reducing [food](#) waste" has been Tristram Stuart's mantra since he was only a teenager. For him it started in his neighborhood, and now he is well known the world over, pursuing several campaigns with his organization called Feedback.

youris.com met him in Milan at People's Expo. "You have to go to the back of the [supermarkets](#). You will find the treasures of a silent daily tragedy. Tons of edible food thrown away, every night, all over the Western world", he said in his speech at the side event of the Universal Exhibition.

## **So there is enough food to feed the world population after all?**

Many of the big international institutions tell us that we need to increase of food production, globally, by 60-70, or even 110 per cent. I think it's completely wrong. The need we have is to protect the long term security of global food supplies and the world's ecosystems. And to achieve this, we need to waste less food. We currently waste a third of the world food supply.

## **Reducing waste can eradicate hunger worldwide?**

I don't argue that reducing waste, by itself, will eliminate hunger. What I'm saying is that hunger won't necessarily be reduced if production were to be increased globally. In fact, an increase can, and by current trends will, contribute to overconsumption and waste.

## **Therefore you claim land grabbing is a major issue...**

Any measure that can turn desert into arable land is godsend. Although it is very difficult, some people are doing that. But it is not the way in which we are generally increasing [global food production](#). We are doing that by taking over thriving habitats that are very rich in life, turning them into agriculture. Let's get there, instead of chopping down forests.

## **One of the reasons for land grabbing is biofuel**

## **production, which increases soil consumption...**

Any biofuel that requires additional virgin land for its production is a bad idea. Because, directly or indirectly, it will increase the amount of deforested land, the effects of which are more negative than positive. Biofuel production is positive when waste products are used. Nevertheless, it is food production, both right now and throughout history that is humanity's single biggest impact on environment.

## **What do you think about the [French law recently approved](#), which forces supermarkets to donate unsold food to charities?**

I myself have been involved in instigating a revolution of attitude in France, in last years. It's what my organization and I are doing around the world. I've been engaging with French government, with organizations like Disco soupe. The French law, actually, is a copy of a pre-existing Belgian law. It sends a signal to supermarkets that it is no longer acceptable to waste food. If I could write the law myself I will have be gone much further: most food actually gets wasted in the supply chains, as a result of supermarket policies.

## **You think we have to change the marketing mindset, the consumers' one?**

Citizens' mindset. I talk about citizens rather than consumers, because we are social people. We have values. And I believe by rooting particular behavior in the values people ordinarily have, we have the ability to change individual behavior. The expectations of my friends, my neighbors, the people I see and, as a consequence, the expectations of companies we pay.

## **You're also opposing the European legislation that**

## **bans animal by-products for pig and poultry feed, issued after several diseases spread...**

Absolutely. I think the single biggest option that we have for the better utilization of food waste in Europe is to replace the existing ban on feed with a legislation to ensure that food waste is captured, sterilized, by being cooked, and used to feed pigs and chickens.

## **Can you explain your campaign "Feeding the 5000"?**

Feeding the 5000 is a platform that brings together organizations. We feed people with food that we have saved from being wasted. From farmers and from everywhere else. I show that [food waste](#) is delicious, both eating and enjoying food together rather than throw it in the bin. This usually captures the imagination of the population and makes them realize that actually we all have a role to play and we can do it, starting from our plates.

Provided by Youris.com

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