

88 million tons a year: Auditors decry EU food waste

January 17 2017, by Raf Casert



A worker removes expired food in a local supermarket in Brussels on Monday, Jan. 16, 2017. The European Court of Auditors has chided the European Union's executive branch in a report, "Combating Food Waste," that decries the bloc's lack of effort in reducing the food waste, estimating the EU wastes 88 million tons of food per year. (AP Photo/Geert Vanden Wijngaert)

The sheer waste of food had been bothering teacher Marijke De Jongh for so long that two years ago she set up a pop-up restaurant to serve

perfectly good groceries and meat that were approaching their expiry date.

With her Rekub team, she followed it up with an app that brings thousands of consumers to retail shops where they can buy food closing in on its sell-by date.

Still, the efforts of a small group of conscientious consumers are no match for the masses that still waste food from farm to fork.

The European Court of Auditors on Tuesday chided the European Union's executive branch in a report, "Combating Food Waste," that decried the bloc's lack of effort in reducing the [food waste](#). It estimated the EU wastes 88 million tons of food a year for a population of 510 million.

"The Commission is not combating the food waste effectively," said ECA member Bettina Jakobsen, noting a lack of strategy and inspiration being used to tackle the problem.

The report said more efforts should be made all along the [food chain](#) and special precautions should be taken when setting farm policy to make sure that less produce is discarded. An EU study, however, shows about half that waste can still be tied to households, not policy.

The ECA also recommended making food donations easier, since they are still mired in legal and tax issues that sometimes become a disincentive for food producers to give food away. It said with better EU regulations that could be turned around.



A worker removes expired food in a local supermarket in Brussels on Monday, Jan. 16, 2017. The European Court of Auditors has chided the European Union's executive branch in a report, "Combating Food Waste," that decries the bloc's lack of effort in reducing the food waste, estimating the EU wastes 88 million tons of food per year. (AP Photo/Geert Vanden Wijngaert)

The European Commission complained the ECA had overlooked recent efforts the member states and the executive had made.

"This commission is fully committed in the fight against food waste and maybe some of these efforts were a bit overlooked," European Commission spokesman Enrico Brivio said.

At the same time, De Jongh continues to try to make a difference at a local level in Antwerp, northern Belgium. After her pop-up experiment in 2015, she is planning a permanent Rekub eatery now.

"We have to keep this moving and put it on everyone's radar," she said.



A worker throws away expired food in a local supermarket in Brussels on Monday, Jan. 16, 2017. The European Court of Auditors has chided the European Union's executive branch in a report, "Combating Food Waste," that decries the bloc's lack of effort in reducing the food waste, estimating the EU wastes 88 million tons of food per year. (AP Photo/Geert Vanden Wijngaert)

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: 88 million tons a year: Auditors decry EU food waste (2017, January 17) retrieved 15 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-01-million-tons-year-auditors-decry.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.