

# SAVE FOOD Congress 2014 brings together international organizations, industry, research and civil society

The SAVE FOOD Initiative is a cooperation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Messe Düsseldorf GmbH to address global food loss and waste. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has also supported the Initiative since the beginning of 2013. SAVE FOOD wishes to bring together stakeholders from industry, politics and research, stimulate dialogue and help to develop solutions along the food value chain. A further aim is to initiate and promote own SAVE FOOD projects with industry support. SAVE FOOD started in May 2011 with an international congress and exhibition as part of interpack, the world's leading trade fair for the packaging industry and related process industry. At interpack 2014 in Düsseldorf on 7 and 8 May, experts from industry, politics and civil society gathered again to discuss the issue of food waste and loss.

Three years after its establishment at the first SAVE FOOD Congress, the SAVE FOOD Initiative has already grown into a broad-based international alliance with over 110 members. The second SAVE FOOD Congress took up this idea and provided a network of representatives from the field of politics, the food and packaging industry, business, research and civil society. In a wide-ranging programme with competent and distinguished speakers, diverse aspects of the problem which were highlighted and solution approaches outlined. The Congress offered participants a forum for the mutual exchange of ideas, for work projects and the identification and analysis of best practices. The two-day Congress took place on 7 and 8 May 2014 at the exhibition grounds of Messe Düsseldorf.

Each day of the Congress had a different focus. On the first day, the spotlight was



major political and civil society approaches. Toine Timmermans, Coordinator of the EU project FUSIONS, and James Lomax, Programme Officer Agri-Food at the UN Environment Programme UNEP, presented the activities of the major international organizations in relation to the issue of food waste and loss. Robert van Otterdijk, Agro-Industry Officer of the Food and Agriculture Organization FAO, demonstrated, based on case studies from Kenya, how food loss in developing and emerging countries can be effectively combated. Tristram Stuart, founder of the campaign "Feeding the 5000-" explained how food, which would ultimately have ended up on the rubbish tip, can still feed many people. Panel discussions included speakers such as Steven T. Sonka, Emeritus Professor of the University of Illinois, who talked about loss-free agriculture, Jeffrey D. Klein, President of the Global Food Banking Network, discussing the positive work of the Die Tafeln e.V. initiative, and Selina Juul, initiator of "Stop Wasting Food", who spoke about the opportunities for consumers to act against food waste. Solutions for Africa were presented amongst others by Adrian van der Knaap from the UN World Food Programme and Wafaa El Khoury from the International Fund for Agriculture Development.

The second day of the Congress dealt with best practice cases from industry and individual companies. Primarily business representatives were given the opportunity to comment and participate in panel discussions. Speakers from industry partners such as Tetrapak, Dow, Maersk and Nestlé presented their successful case studies. The programme of lectures were supplemented and diversified, as on the first day, with several panel discussions. In addition, director and movie maker Valentin Thurn showed clips from his movie "Food Savers" which focused on practical approaches to reduce the mountains of wasted food.

Apart from the Congress, visitors saw Innovationparc Packaging, a unique signature feature of interpack and the trade fair's own forum for future-oriented special topics. Concrete practical solutions were shown including current innovations from different companies to reduce food loss.

"As a meeting point for international decision makers from all relevant areas, it is the intention of the SAVE FOOD Congress to pool expertise, encourage dialogue, and exploit synergies and give new impetus. I am certain that the Congress will have a decisive impact on promoting our common objective," said Werner M. Dornscheidt, President and CEO of Messe Düsseldorf GmbH. ♦