Our approach

We are the UK’s fourth largest supermarket. We are both food-maker and shopkeeper, running our own manufacturing operations which comprise abattoirs, factories and pack houses, as well as almost 500 supermarkets.

We are different to most other supermarkets in that we make the majority of the fresh food we sell in our stores this means that we own a large portion of our supply chain and can therefore more accurately forecast production than other retailers.

With such direct control we can cut down on waste at every stage. However, we know that our customers and colleagues care about the food that is wasted in our stores. Food waste represents less than 0.5% of our total sales, with total edible food waste around 0.02% on average.

We want to ensure that this small amount of food is eaten which minimises our environmental impact, engages colleagues on the issue of surplus food and creates greater links with the local communities where our stores operate.

Key Facts

- 80% of our stores are working with over 420 local community groups to redistribute edible surplus food. In the first year of the programme, we’ve donated 2m products.
- Utilising our data and analysis provided for us by WRAP, we estimate that in 2016 food redistributed to local community groups made a positive environmental impact equivalent to around 2,500 tonnes CO2e.
- We work with partner organisations Company Shop, regional Fareshare depots and His Church to redistribute surplus in our supply chain. In 2016, Company Shop alone collected 1,572 tonnes of product from suppliers or our distribution network that would otherwise have been wasted.
- We launched a range of ‘Wonky Veg’ at a discounted price – which includes onions, potatoes, carrots and parsnips. We’re now selling over 500 tonnes of Wonky Veg per week in our stores.
The issue

According to the UN, if food waste were a country it would be the third largest emitter behind the USA and China. An estimated 10 million of tonnes of food is wasted post farm gate in the UK each year, at a cost of £5bn.

As a food maker and retailer, we feel it’s important that we drive smarter supply chains by reducing avoidable food waste and following the food waste hierarchy of prevention, redistribution, optimisation, recycling, recovery and, as a last resort, responsible disposal.

Our approach  The issue  Actions taken  Surplus food redistribution (Case study 1)  Surplus food redistribution (Case study 2)  Future plans
Actions taken

We ran a trial in over 100 stores in 2015 to help develop a best practice model for redistribution. Stores were encouraged to find a local community partner that could utilise a variety of food including products just past ‘Best Before’ dates, fresh and frozen products. Internal waste systems were updated so that we could accurately record the amount of food being redistributed.

The trial was successful with over 80% of stores working successfully with a local partner. As a result, we rolled out the programme to the rest of the estate from the start of 2016. Working with corporate responsibility, technical, food safety and retail operations teams, each store was provided with a communications pack on how to set up a partnership. Community Champions in store were responsible for finding a local community partner whilst overall responsibility of the programme was with the Duty Manager.

In it’s first year, the programme has donated 2 million products to local community groups.
Our approach
The issue
Actions taken

Surplus food redistribution (Case study 1)

Surplus food redistribution (Case study 2)

Future plans
Our approach

The issue

Actions taken

Surplus food redistribution (Case study 1)

Surplus food redistribution (Case study 2)

Future plans
Future plans

- Our aim is for every store to work effectively with a local community group to redistribute edible surplus food and increasing the amount we currently redistribute.

- We will continue to work with our food redistribution partners to look at opportunities for further redistribution with our supply chain and in particular in our own manufacturing sites.

- We will extend our Wonky Veg range further to include wonky swede, apples, pears, sprouts and leeks in addition to onions, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, cabbage, cauliflower, courgettes and peppers.