

Waste

IKEA dishes up smart tech-enabled drive to halve food waste



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Food is Precious initiative aims to use smart technologies to slash food waste across the company's 400 stores
customers each year. As such the company yesterday announced it was extending its wide-ranging sustainability efforts to include a new initiative to cut food waste across its stores by 50 per cent by the end of fiscal year 2020.

The company said the new Food is Precious initiative would slash food waste levels by extending a successful trial, initially piloted in the UK, across all its 400 stores operating in 48 markets.

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The pilot scheme saw a smart scale-based technology deployed in Ikea's UK and Ireland stores to measure food waste and identify areas where savings can be made.

The company said the approach has already saved food waste equivalent to over 176,000 meals.

The system is now in place in 84 stores globally and has led to a reduction in food waste of 79,200kg, equal to 341,000kg of CO2 savings. Ikea said a staff survey found over 70 per cent of employees were proud of the initiative, while 50 per cent are taking measures at home to decrease food waste.

Michael La Cour, managing director at Ikea Food Services AB, said the initial results from the roll out had been "very encouraging".

"Thanks to engaged co-workers and the measuring solution, we see up to 30 per cent food waste reduction already after a few months," he said. "I am following the development closely and hope it can encourage others to start thinking about food as a precious resource."

The company also announced yesterday that it has joined the Champions 12.3 coalition, which brings together businesses, governments, and NGOs working to deliver the UN's Sustainable Development Goal on food waste.

And in related news, the Institute of Food Science & Technology (IFST), the leading qualifying body for food professionals in Europe, has this month **published a major new report** highlighting how its members can help tackle many of the sustainability challenges faced by the food industry.

John Bassett, IFST Policy and Scientific Development Director said the new report would be followed by a series of new initiatives to help develop and promote environmental best practices. "We aim to provide practical support for those looking to implement sustainable practices, and proactive messaging to encourage joined up, evidence based policy and strategy development by UK government and food system stakeholders throughout the farm to fork continuum," he said.



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