Food Losses in Primary Production – a snapshot

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UN accounting of Food Losses in Primary Production

− SDG 12.3 subgoal is to reduce food losses until 2030
− estimated 13% of total global production lost
− previous data turned out to underestimate losses, direct measurement should be implemented
− pre-harvest and harvest losses not included in Food Loss Index
European Union: Food Losses in Primary Production

- obligatory reporting on food waste in place for EU members
- pre-harvest and harvest losses not accounted as “food”
- legal definition of “waste” very strict – most material in PP goes as “agricultural material”, not as “waste”
- 30% of European FW from PP and processing (17 mio tonnes/yr)*
- mindset is “natural closed loop” and benefits as fertilizer
- food loss is seen as “problem of Global South”

*Eurostat, 2023
More than **27%** of the produced fruits are **not paid** to the farmer
Barriers for food loss prevention

− lack of reliable forecasts of food loss amounts due to dependency on external and natural events
− missing reliable FL data as basis for action
− lack of existing reliable cooperation networks to find alternatives for perishable surpluses
− unclear requirements and expectations of stakeholders including consumers
Innovative solutions targeting losses in early supply chain, examples

- marketing of suboptimal food to fresh market B2B or B2C
- processing of suboptimal, surplus food or food industry by-products to food ingredients or new food products
- gleaning activities & donation & redistribution
Example: Gleaning activities in Europe

- different mindset towards gleaning activities in EU countries
- various initiatives e.g. from Spain, Greece, UK show good practice
- concerns about food hygiene, damage of perennial cultures, legal and contractual aspects can be solved
- redistribution supports fresh food supply to vulnerable groups
Conclusion

- food should be used for its highest possible use -> human nutrition -> environmental, economic and social aspects
- ongoing research to discuss definition & methodology and improve data basis
- more and more business cases demonstrate feasible opportunities supported by technology
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-> plenty of unexploited and unexplored potential!
Thank you for your attention!

Collaboration Initiative Food Losses and Waste