

Waste Management
Statement by Farmers
CSD – IPM
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Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, and colleagues,

Agriculture will need to produce more to serve basic nutritional needs. In order to achieve a global average food consumption of 3130 kcal per person per day for 9 billion people by 2050, an additional **billion tonnes of cereals** and **200 million tonnes of meat** would need to be produced annually.¹

Reducing production losses and food waste is an essential to making those productivity gains. We need to use more of what we grow.

Wasteful lifestyles and production continue to be barriers for quenching hunger, thirst and malnutrition. Last year, FAO estimated that poorly developed systems for handling, storage, packaging, transporting and marketing of agricultural products in developing countries results in post-harvest losses ranging from 15% to a whopping 50%. Investment in food infrastructure and handling could reduce losses. But, as OECD points out, the problem of food waste is not limited to developing countries. One study suggests that 40-50% of food that is ready for harvest in the US is not consumed, and that US households waste an average of 14% of their food purchases.

Waste is worst in fresh produce which delivers vital nutrients to humans around the globe. Losses in both the developed and developing world are estimated at over 30%.

All these losses lead to other forms of waste. One estimate puts the energy embodied in wasted food in the United States as equivalent to 2% to total energy consumption – roughly the same percentage as agriculture consumes to grow food in the first place.

¹ Bruinsma, 2009. Based on comparisons to 2005-07 levels.

Agricultural waste needs to be reduced, and waste that does occur needs to be used more constructively. Where once it was used as feed for livestock, now it often ends up as land fill. Models for sustainable development must involve proper management of waste from farming operations. This involves minimizing agricultural waste while maximizing environmentally sound reuse and recycling.

Too often farmers in developing countries lack resources, knowledge and information about techniques and waste management procedures. Government education and incentive policies are needed on topics like biogas. Re-use of spoiled food in rural areas as feed and compost, and as green energy in urban areas, will help to minimize the impact of losses.

Then action is required throughout the food chain, including at the consumer level, to reduce food waste. Proper storage, market signals, transportation, and processing are needed – ironically often in the countries where food can least afford to be wasted. So, too, we need to educate consumers and end users. For once food moves to cities, vast percentages of it go to waste there.

Training, education and extension programs are essential, as are investments in infrastructure to stop this waste.