

KlimaExpo.NRW

Engine for Progress



The State Government of
North Rhine-Westphalia



Saving Resources – Too good for the bin

Sustainability in the kitchen

Award-Winning Project

Too good for the bin

1.2 million tons of kitchen and canteen waste are produced each year throughout NRW alone, so it is worth taking a closer look to see where we can avoid throwing food away. At Ruhr University Bochum, the Akademisches Förderungswerk (Academic Support Foundation) organised a working group consisting of staff from all areas of the university's catering services to search for solutions. This resulted in measures that have reduced the amount of waste generated by almost 15 cubic metres each month.

30 minutes before closing,
reduced prices mean there are no leftovers.

25 % less
food waste per year.

15 m³ less waste
generated each month.

11 canteens
and 22 cafeterias belonging to
AKAFÖ will soon be joining in.

0 cooking
in the last 30 minutes.
Sold out means sold out.



Too good for the bin

Motivated by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture's "Too good for the bin" campaign, Akademisches Förderungswerk (AKAFÖ) Bochum formed a working group of employees from all areas of catering – with the aim of reducing food waste by five to ten per cent.

The project was implemented in the canteens of Ruhr University Bochum as well as the Westphalian University of Applied Sciences' three campuses in Gelsenkirchen, Bocholt and Recklinghausen. The pilot phase ran from August 2013 to January 2014 without requiring any major investment. Employees took a close look at their day-to-day activities and developed simple and effective measures.

The major factor was not technical solutions or dramatic changes to the services provided but rather the motivation of the employees themselves. A task force – consisting of staff working in stockrooms, food preparation areas and on service counters – analysed the processes and came up with new suggestions. It was a great success!



Systematically reducing food waste

In its efforts to provide food that is both good-quality and good-value, a large catering company already takes care to handle food products efficiently. If food waste can be reduced by 25 per cent, as the AKAFÖ has achieved in four university canteens, that really is something special and is well above the original target. This success is based on a number of factors:

Thirty minutes before closing, food that would otherwise have to be thrown away is offered at cheaper prices. Food that is still good to eat is handled differently – it is sold the next day as “yesterday’s best” at a discounted price. The full range of dishes is also no longer replenished up until the canteen closes, and the size of the containers for serving the food has been reduced. In addition to this, a digital stock management system networks the locations so that stock can be exchanged more efficiently.

“Our project shows that even with supposedly simple measures, much can be done to safeguard resources. The commitment of the staff was crucial to the process.”

Ezzedine Zerria,
Catering Management

Leading by example

The Ruhr University Bochum campus is huge. With more than 60,000 people on site every day, it is more like a small town. The students demand high standards and are particularly aware of climate protection issues. A key institution such as the Akademisches Förderungswerk and its flagship, the canteen, are very closely scrutinised. A greater appreciation of food resources and similar ideas send out a strong message here.

Through advertising and special campaigns, the AKAFÖ is also getting people at the University interested in the topic of “preventing food waste”, thus reflecting the current trend towards critical consumption. The new measures in the “Too good for the bin” campaign don’t even involve drastic cutbacks. On the contrary, they even include discounted offers for canteen customers – such as “yesterday’s best”. It’s going down well.



Sustainable all along the line

The Akademisches Förderungswerk has a long tradition of implementing sustainability measures. For example, only fair trade coffee has been served in the canteens and cafeterias since 1993. The halls of residence rely on green electricity. And the use of organic products from the region has been the standard in the catering service for a long time. When it comes to reducing food waste, saving resources is also seen from a holistic perspective.

As a result, the team is always on the lookout for energy wastage. For example, soda machines are switched off when not in use – small measures with a big impact. Meanwhile, AKAFÖ has also successfully participated in the ÖKOPROFIT programme, a first step towards introducing a comprehensive environmental management system. This aims at reducing operating costs whilst protecting natural resources.

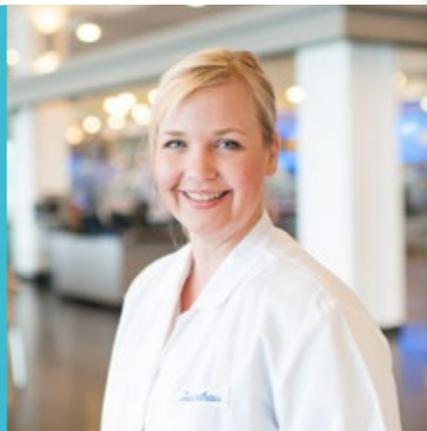
A win-win situation for the University and for climate protection

The “Too good for the bin” project not only has benefits for the environment but also for the Studierendenwerk (student union) – both in terms of purchasing as well as waste disposal. As a result, 25 per cent of food waste has been prevented: much more than was planned or even thought possible. The ecological effects go far beyond the University. If less food is wasted, less has to be produced – this has a positive effect on the land and reduces the amount of water needed for irrigation.

The AKAFÖ also uses as many local foods and organic products as possible, promotes a return-refill system for coffee and also tries to prevent waste in areas other than food. The project is not over; rather it will be gradually expanded to all AKAFÖ catering facilities. In doing so, further sustainability issues will be examined. All in all, this is a prime example of how to keep resource consumption as low as possible in NRW.

“The measures implemented during the ‘Too good for the bin’ and ÖKOPROFIT projects show that seemingly small changes can also result in big savings overall.”

Judith Lindhaus,
AKAFÖ Quality Assurance



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AKAFÖ



On behalf of the state government, KlimaExpo.NRW presents North Rhine-Westphalia's technological, economic and scientific potential for climate protection and adaptation to the impacts of climate change. The initiative is both a showcase and a laboratory of ideas for the state of NRW. Every year, KlimaExpo.NRW presents awards to three projects in four thematic fields, which illustrate climate protection as an engine for progress particularly well.



Rethinking Energy

New ideas are constantly emerging from business, research, municipalities and civil society on how we can fundamentally change our energy systems to be climate-friendly – and how the transformation of the energy system can succeed.



Saving Resources

NRW aims to lower resource consumption and reduce emissions – through new materials, innovative technologies, greater productivity and the promotion of sustainable consumption patterns.



Enhancing Communities

Metropolitan regions shaped by industry, urban districts and rural areas make NRW the ideal showplace for climate-friendly redevelopment of urban infrastructure, reorganising the relationships between cities and rural areas and implementing measures for adapting to climate change.



Shaping Mobility

Passenger and freight transport should be efficient and climate-friendly. NRW is addressing this challenge with the development of alternative drives and fuels, and by testing and establishing sustainable mobility concepts.