



Time to step forward

With Australia's first detailed study of the food cold chain completed in 2020, it is now time for some major improvements to the sector. Australian Food Cold Chain Council executive director **Greg Picker** writes.

manufacturers through to retailers and households. By reducing food waste, we can improve business bottom lines, put money back into household budgets and make better use of our natural resources."

So, what will 2021 bring along with an organisation dedicated to reducing food waste?

The AFCCC, which is now a Partner with Stop Food Waste Australia, is developing "Part Two of the Cold Food Code: Fresh Produce". The aim is to compile and synthesise the practices that need to be followed to deliver necessary levels of performance.

Additionally, a range of targeted training packages will be developed to ensure this information is conveyed to the thousands of people working in the cold chain and that it is relevant for their individual roles. Finally, a simple app will be developed where data to support effective management of fresh produce in the cold food chain can be easily and quickly accessed.

This will include information of temperature and humidity requirements for fresh produce and access to simple procedures to assist food cold chain practitioners getting access to accurate information quickly.

But the key actors are not stopping here. Stop Food Waste will also commence a program where companies take on voluntary commitments to reduce food waste.

Companies who sign up to this program will need to assess the amount of food waste they

performance of broader Australian industry.

The benefits to companies in enrolling in the program are noteworthy, including getting ongoing support to better understand their own processes and access to best practice information and technology to reducing food waste.

Programs such as these have consistently saved companies money by improving the efficiency of their operations and allowing them to demonstrate to their investors, the market, and their customers that they are focused on ongoing improvements.

The Voluntary Commitment program is intended to be a central plank enabling Australian companies to learn how to stop food waste – companies are encouraged to consider whether they would be interested in engaging.

Stop Food Waste Australia

will also work with key companies to develop a Sectoral Action Plan focused on the cold chain. This plan is aimed at setting the agenda for future improvements in the food cold chain beyond the immediate horizon and ongoing activities.

The sector action plan will bring together key companies engaged in the cold food chain

to identify means of getting better data and sharing it widely, to explore possible ways of drastically improving performance of the cold food chain and engaging broader stakeholders like insurance companies and others interested in improving the performance of the sector.

I said before that we clearly have problems in the cold food

chain, but the problems have solutions. My expectation is that in 2021 we will shift from the stage of figuring out what we need to do, to really begin to implement practical fixes which will improve performance.

If you want to know more about any of this, or want to find out how to be involved, please contact the AFCCC at info@afccc.org.au.



IMAGES: The Sydney warehouse of Perfection Fresh is working to reduce food waste in its cold chain.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Picker is the executive director of the Australian Food Cold Chain Council. The AFCCC is an advocacy group dedicated to improving compliance and standards in the handling of food at all levels of the cold chain.



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of tonnes of food that ends up in landfill every year by 2030 by bringing together the brightest minds in supply chain management, food waste NGOs and all tiers of government to tackle the problem.

At the launch, Assistant

half of the food loss in the cold food chain was due from failures in people managing the cold food chain well.

Our problem clearly has solutions. 2020 also saw the development of the first part of a cold food code to solve these issues.

The Australian Food Cold Chain Council (AFCCC), working with numerous industry partners, developed a guideline for the use, selection and calibration of thermometer by cold food chain practitioners. This will be launched early 2021.

Finally, on Boxing Day 2020, the Morrison Government announced it was spending \$4 million to establish an organisation aimed solely at reducing Australia's food waste.

Stop Food Waste Australia's ambition is to halve the millions

"The sector action plan will bring together key companies engaged in the cold food chain to... explore possible ways of drastically improving performance."

Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management Trevor Evans said: "Stop Food Waste Australia will support change in all parts of the food supply chain, from farmers and food

generate annually, identify the causes of the food waste, and take cost-effective steps to prevent ongoing waste. The process is repeated annually, and the key lessons learned may be shared to improve