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By Fred Searle

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Sodexo to the rescue

The multinational caterer has joined forces with Midlands supplier Ferryfast and food waste firm Waste Knot to supply schools and businesses with fruit and vegetables rescued from UK farms.



French foodservice giant Sodexo has launched a 'food rescue' initiative called Wasteful to Tasteful to help reduce the volume of out-of-spec fresh produce being thrown away by UK growers or left to rot in the field.

With over 30 per cent of British crops never leaving the farm, Sodexo has joined forces with Waste Knot, an organisation that links businesses with surplus produce, and Ferryfast, a co-operative of fresh produce growers in Worcestershire.

The collaboration will see boxes of rescued fruit and vegetables delivered in recycled banana boxes to Sodexo's catering teams across the country.

Currently, 112 Sodexo sites across the business areas of corporate service, universities, state schools, energy and resources, and government services, receive weekly 15kg vegetable boxes and monthly 5kg fruit boxes.

The fresh produce provided is seasonal and British, and as part of the collaboration a further 70 UK schools will be added soon.

Sodexo said that reducing waste is a key priority for the company and one that is reflected in its 'Better Tomorrow' corporate responsibility commitments.

The foodservice company is also signed up to Wrap's Courtauld Commitment 2025, which aims to cut national waste by 20 per cent in the next seven years. And last week it committed to Wrap's Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, which targets a 50 per cent reduction in food companies' waste by 2030.

Catrin Thorndike, category and sustainable procurement manager for Sodexo UK & Ireland, said: "We are extremely excited to be able to use these vegetables which, apart from their look and size, still retain their nutritional value and delicious taste.

"The produce is perfect for use in a range of dishes including soups, stews and puddings as it really doesn't matter what they look like before they are prepared and cooked.

"If we can demonstrate that our top chefs can create delicious and inspiring dishes using wonky veg then hopefully it will help encourage our customers to do the same at home."

Sodexo said the implementation of Wasteful to Tasteful builds on its commitment to offer more plant-based and 'plant-forward' meals. Over the last five years the company has worked with the World Wildlife Fund to create new plant-based recipes, and in the past year the French multinational has made 'Veg Pledges' to procure 10 per cent more vegetables by 2020, and 16 per cent more by 2025, as part of the Food Foundation's Peas Please initiative.

Commenting on the Wasteful to Tasteful initiative, Edwina Hughes, corporate

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responsibility director for Sodexo UK & Ireland, said: "It is our aspiration to become the leading

foodservice company in the plant-forward movement and this initiative supports our efforts in this area."

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