

Driving sustainable agriculture

Comment: GODAN executive director Andre Laperrière explains how open data can help farmers become more sustainable and reduce food waste in the supply chain



Andre Laperrière

With 795 million people currently going hungry and the world in the midst of a climate crisis, wasting food remains a constant problem, and one which is hindering the battle in addressing such issues.

In the UK alone, 4.5m tonnes of food is wasted every year, which amounts to one quarter of man-made greenhouse gas emissions, while a growing population and ever-changing demands lead to more of a strain on the food supply chain, again leading to waste.

Food is being put into landfill and is producing high amounts of methane, heating up the atmosphere at an alarming rate. This has put huge pressure on the agricultural industry, which in turn, is also using more water to help produce meat and crops. If these rates continue, the knock-on effect it will have on the world would cause greater harm to the industry and the society it

serves, leading to more starvation and more environmental damage as it would not be able to up its food production.

Therefore, reducing our food waste is one of the most important issues we need to tackle sooner rather than later. Much of this can be by driving forward sustainable agriculture, where food is produced to meet the needs of society while at the same time not harming the land.

This can be achieved by actively engaging with and using open data, where farmers will be able to access accurate and relevant information on how and when to plant crops, due to being able to know weather patterns, soil quality and other key data. This will maximise crop yield and allow for the appropriate amount of food to be produced for society. From being able to share data, there will be the chance in which to learn and innovate to identify even greater ways to reduce food waste.

However, this will also require the active cooperation of the public to help ease the current situation. This can be through simple methods such as making food last longer, re-using leftovers and even planning shopping more effectively.

This is easier said than done, and that is why GODAN openly supports Food Waste Action Week on 11 May to help educate, empower and inspire creativity to help make a much greener supply chain and a more prosperous society which will thrive.

Andre Laperrière is *the Executive Director of Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN), a UK, US, United Nations and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) supported initiative that supports the proactive sharing of Open Data to make*

information about agriculture and nutrition available, accessible and usable to deal with the urgent challenge of ensuring world food security.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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