

2016 APEC Professional Consultation Meeting of Retailers and Consumers’ Food Loss and Waste Problem Held in Taipei

Min-Hsien Yang, Professor, Feng Chia University, Taiwan

I Han, Assistant Professor, Feng Chia University, Taiwan

Source: Council of Agriculture

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) research, as high as 1.3 billion metric tons of food, or one-third of the annual global food production, get lost and wasted every year. Particularly, the food losses and wastes occur at the end of the supply chain, in retailers and consumers, which might account for 46% or 0.6 billion metric tons of food losses and wastes. Council of Agriculture (COA) pointed out a lot of negative impacts out of food losses and wastes, especially 26% in the APEC regions, or 0.67 billion metric tons, while 40% (0.267 billion metric tons) is attributed to the end of the supply chain, retailers or consumers. Such huge amount of food loss and waste can fully supply to below-poverty-line population, which is estimated to be 800 million people living in the APEC areas, a whole year of food demand. Therefore, it is utmost important to initiate food security policy by reducing food losses and wastes from end user hands.

“2016 APEC Professional Consultation Meeting of Retailers and Consumers’ Food Loss and Waste Problem” was held in Taipei on July 18 and 19. This meeting is one of the fourth year of multi-year project of “APEC Strengthening Private-public Partnership to Reduce Food Losses in Supply Chain”. There were 10 professional participants from Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Taiwan, and other 50 attendances from 15 APEC membership economies. All participants and attendees discussed the current status and evaluation methods of food losses and wastes at retailers and consumers to clarify key factors and to share experiences in reducing food losses and wastes.

The most severe food loss and waste is the meat across the APEC regions, retailers accounted for 27% while consumers accounted for 45%. Although food loss and waste differs by product and by country, the big trend show that food waste is the major problem in developed countries, while food loss is more severer in developing countries. According to Taiwan-led multi-year project, the research shows that if 10% of reduced of food loss in APEC membership countries, the total social welfare can be increased by US\$14.3 billion. The effort on 10% reduction of food loss can then make a great achievement in reducing food price and promote regional food security.

COA said that this meeting provided private-public partnership experiences to each participating country and raised the attention level of APEC in resolving the problem of food losses and wastes in order to promote food security in the region. The dialogues between professional experts and national policy makers in this meeting will further strengthen the private-public partnership in reducing food losses and wastes to enhance food security, evaluation efficiency, and social welfare in the Asia-Pacific region. It is expected to align professional efforts of private-public partnership to accomplish the goal of diminishing the poverty by “APEC Food Security Roadmap Towards 2020” and “UN Millennium Development Project”.

In order to expand the outcome of the multi-year APEC project led by Taiwan, COA explained that the milestone of this meeting and upcoming research findings will be presented at the conference of “2016 APEC Conference on Strengthening Private-Public Partnership and Retailers and Consumers Food Loss and Waste Problem” to be held in Peru this September. In that conference, the presentation of the research outcome will be proposed to be included into the official addressing document of 2016 Minister Meeting of Food Security in order to provide references to all APEC membership economies to make contributions to food security in the Asia-Pacific region.

Date submitted: July 31, 2016

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: Aug. 3, 2016