Reducing waste by just removing a label

24th of November, Stefan Fürst

The supermarket chain EasyShop introduced an initiative to reduce food waste, in which they got rid of the “Best before” label to prevent edible food from being thrown away.

Alice Smythe, EasyShop's Food Waste Manager, talked about how a high percentage of customers don't realise that ‘best before’ is not the same as 'use by' - edible food that has passed its 'best before' date is not bought and therefore thrown away.

For this reason, the decision was made to only mark their fresh vegetables, fruit and dairy products with the legally required ‘Use by’ label. They also have two other initiatives called ‘Ugly but Nice’ and ‘Waste Not Want Not’, where they sell odd-looking food and vegetables at lower prices and donate surplus food to local charities.

To evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives, we asked shoppers about their thoughts on this subject. The most common responses were the following: “I never knew those labels are different.” and “More supermarkets should implement this as well”. This shows that the initiative is working and has the potential to reduce the amount of produced food waste if more companies follow EasyShops steps.

All in all, this is a very positive change and proves that communicating properly with the customer rather than confusing them with arbitrary labels to make more profit, can be an effective way to reduce waste and help the environment.

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