UK Could Be Losing Out on 800m Meals from 'Hidden Food' Which Could Help 5.8m People in 'Deep Poverty'

Tuesday 29 July, 2014

The UK could be losing out on 800m meals from 'hidden food' which could help 5.8m people living in 'deep poverty', according to food redistribution charity FareShare. The charity already provides over 12m meals from this 'hidden food' source to tackle food hunger.

FareShare which celebrates its' 10th anniversary as an independent organisation this year, tackles food poverty through redistributing food surplus (within the food and drink industry) to charities. It estimates that up to 400,000 tonnes of this food surplus is edible and in date and could provide 800m meals; equivalent to 13 meals per person in the UK.

Lindsay Boswell, CEO of FareShare said: “FareShare has been working with leading supermarkets and suppliers for over 20 years to rescue good food from going to waste and redirect it to people in need across the UK. Over the past decade we have redistributed enough surplus to provide over 67m meals. This is a great milestone to reach in our 10th anniversary and we are only using 1.5 per cent of surplus food. However this is just the tip of the iceberg of what is potentially available and we could be providing so much more from this source.

“We have built a sustainable and successful model to tackle food hunger through food waste, which all started thanks to our original founders Crisis and Sainsbury's. Without their input we wouldn't be here today helping feed 62,200 people daily and I look forward to building on this success for the future.”

The original FareShare was established in 1994 by homelessness charity Crisis and Sainsbury's from a similar model in America which put surplus food to good use. They looked into setting up the first FareShare model in London that year. Crisis expanded FareShare from 1994 to 2004 and Sainsbury's became one of FareShare's major food partners. FareShare then became an independent organisation in 2004 to expand and now has 18 regional centres across the UK with more branches opening later this year.

Leslie Morphy, chief executive of Crisis said: “FareShare's continued success is a real source of pride for us here at Crisis and a testament to the dedication of its staff. We established FareShare 20 years ago as a way to get surplus food to people who need it most and it has remained true to its founding mission, thriving as a charity in its own right. Sadly, its work is now more important than ever.”

Sainsbury's Head of Sustainability, Energy and Environment Paul Crewe said: “We're delighted to celebrate FareShare's 10th anniversary with them as a founding partner. I've watched the charity go from strength to strength and hope their important work continues for many years to come.”

Since becoming an independent organisation in 2004, FareShare has seen huge growth in the following areas:

- FareShare's growing reach in food poverty in the UK; the number of meals provided by FareShare has increased by more than **300% over 10 years**. (1)
- FareShare's rapid growth; the number of charities becoming FareShare members have increased by more than 400**% over 10 years.** (2)
- FareShare's growth in tackling food waste by redistributing surplus food*; the amount of food FareShare redistributes has increased by **205% over 10 years.** (3)

Lindsay Boswell, CEO of FareShare concluded: “We have grown phenomenally over the past 10 years in our UK operations and our links within the food and drink industry. We have a huge challenge in the future in getting further into the supply chain to meet ever growing demand for our services but we have a solid and sustainable solution to food poverty which can help tackle an ever growing issue in Britain.”

For more information please contact Gurvinder Sidhu, Senior PR and Press Officer at FareShare on 0207 394 2460 | 07415 238 328 |gurvinder.sidhu@fareshare.org.uk

* Surplus food in the food and drink industry supply chain that would otherwise go to waste.

(1) FareShare provided 2.8 million meals in 2004-05, that number has increased to more than 12 million

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in 2013-14, an increase of 328% over 10 years.

(2) FareShare redistributed food to 250 charities and community organisations in 2004-05, that number has increased to 1,296 in 2013-14, an increase of 418 per cent over 10 years.

(3) FareShare redistributed 1,800 tonnes in 2004-05, that number has increased to 5,500 in 2013-14, an increase of 205% over 10 years.

Notes to Editor:

About FareShare:

- FareShare tackles the twin issues of food poverty and food waste.
    - FareShare provides food to over 1,290 charities helping to feed more than 62,200 people every day across the UK, including homeless shelters, women's refuge centres, children's breakfast clubs and luncheon clubs for older people.
    - Demand for food from FareShare member charities is rising at an alarming rate. 59% have had more people turning to them for food. 70% fear demand will only increase in the future.
    - The majority of the food FareShare redistributes is surplus and would otherwise go to waste. The food collection with Tesco allows FareShare to get hold of long life products that rarely become surplus, so member charities can be provided with more food during the summer.
    - Surplus food is anything that can no longer be sold but is still within date. It has become surplus for various reasons such as overproduction, incorrect labelling and damaged packaging.
        - All FareShare member charities offer invaluable support services to some of the poorest people in the UK. Through FareShare each charity saves around £13,000 a year on their food bills.
        - Go to: www.fareshare.org.uk/ | Facebook: FareShare | Twitter: @FareShareUK

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