

Restaurant Contest 2018 Zurich

The project at a glance



1. PROJECT

Food consumption accounts for one-sixth of all CO₂ emissions in Switzerland. In order to reduce greenhouse gases and environmental pollution in Zurich to a sustainable level, there is a need for action. To prove that there is a large potential, six canteens in Zürich participated voluntarily in a competition with the goal to reduce their CO₂ values of all consumed menus. For 8 weeks, the restaurants were overlooked by the project team regarding selection, planning and realization of different arrangements. Their menu planning was accompanied and supported by detailed CO₂ calculations that compared measurements out of a preceding 8 weeks trial. Each restaurant was free to creatively try out different measures like small contests, prize competitions, personal recommendation or other forms of communication to overcome emotional habits and food cravings.

2. RESULTS

The restaurants used 25 different measures to improve supply and demand of sustainable food - far more than expected. On average, the CO₂ emission could be reduced by 19% and the winner even managed to achieve 42% of CO₂ reductions. This corresponds to an absolute reduction of 9 tons CO₂-equivalent in total or illustrated the saving of CO₂ consumption of 7 cars circling the earth. While CO₂ emission were lowered, the satisfaction of the guests in the restaurants increased during the competition.

3. CONCLUSION

By means of a cooperative approach, a significant amount of CO₂ can be reduced in the food sector in a relatively short time. Measuring concurrently the success increases the motivation and participation of restaurant staff and clients. Adaptations in the entire offer lead to a big effect in CO₂-reduction, but they require the willingness of the operators to cooperate as well as the acceptance of the guests. Therefore, the optimal strategy depends on the individual competence and requirements of the restaurant, the engagement and know-how of the operators with sustainable nutrition as well as reactions of guests.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The developed concepts and instruments can enable the food sector to achieve significant CO₂ reductions on a voluntary and cost attractive basis. There is great potential for a broader application. With this goal in mind, the concept should continue to be developed, especially in the

- classification of the operations that are able to offer combinations of solutions to achieve the best results (scalable delivery of the solution)
- specific and fair rules for methods of measurement and monitoring (CO₂ impacts calculation)
- standardized mechanism of feedback to impart knowledge and motivate (process optimization)

extension, improvement and standardization of materials (communication)