

# **A Wastage-free Zone Ahead**



**G**reen groups and business companies have introduced various measures to reduce food wastage as well as to recycle food waste into organic materials.

“I think it is unreasonable to fine me for unfinished dishes. I’ve paid for the meal,” said Chris Yu Tsun-yin, a customer in a buffet restaurant with a penalty system for fining customers who have leftovers.

“I will simply leave the meal unfinished when I am full,” said Lung Ting-on, a journalism major student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, while having his lunch at the school student canteen.

“It all depends on the taste of the food,” he added.

Greeners Action, a charitable and environmental conservation organization locally registered by a group of youngsters, conducted a survey on the dining habits of Hong Kong people between October and December last year.

In the survey, of 826 respondents who had just dined out, only 16 percent said they could finish what they ordered, while 84 percent left food behind. Among those who were unable to finish their meals, nine percent had at least one third of their food left over.

The problem of food wastage has captured the public’s attention.

Greeners Action has recently launched a campaign called “Save Food Day” with the support from the Environment and Conservation

Fund, which has been set up by the government since 1994 to provide funding support to local non-profit making organizations for projects and activities in relation to environmental and conservation matters.

Taking effect from February until October, the first Wednesday of each month is marked as “Save Food Day”, in which customers can request participating eateries to reduce one third of the original amount of rice to get a one-dollar discount.

According to a survey the green group conducted last year, 64 percent of respondents usually have rice left over. The survey also shows that 48 percent of respondents regard meal portions over-sized while 28 percent are dissatisfied with the taste of the food.

# FOOD IS PRECIOUS,



JOEY MOK



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Poster of “Save Food Day” from Greeners Action

## DON'T WASTE IT.

“The quantity of meals may be too much for them, or it the food may not taste nice so they can’t finish the meal,” said Yip Chui-man, the project officer of Greeners Action.

“Most people actually do not understand how hard the process of food production is. They simply think that they have already paid for the meal, so they can do whatever they like with it,” she added.

According to Miss Yip, some people are afraid that they would get less for their money if they request for less rice. “There must be a special event to help change their thinking, dining habits and values,” she added.

Some participating restaurants in the campaign consider this event very significant.

“I feel so odd when I see my customers leaving food uneaten. Are they simply ordering too many dishes? Or is the food prepared by my chefs not delicious enough? To me, finishing off all dishes is civilized behaviour,” said Kwong Wah On, the Assistant General Manager of Hoover Restaurant.

A worker from another participating eatery, the Bayview Cafe Dessert Restaurant Bar, raised another benefit of this campaign. “It incubates more environmentally friendly eating habits. It not only encourages less wastage, but also helps lower our operating costs, especially when food prices are rising these days,” said the staff.

Akito Chan Ho-chi, a university student, said restaurants could provide meals of different portions. “The meal sets can be divided into different sizes to cater to people’s different needs,” Miss Chan said.

For handling food waste, Swire Properties has introduced a food waste recycling machine called Gomixer, which is located at the basement of Festival Walk, a shopping mall at Kowloon Tong.

Gomixer treats food waste as much as 100 kilograms, which is collected from six food shop operators in its food court. “Such an initiative does not only bring a number of intangible benefits and values to Swire Properties and the community, but also helps reduce landfill pressure. It helps reduce the transportation cost of food waste as well,” said the spokesperson for Swire Properties.

The spokesman continued, “This kind of facility helps arouse public awareness about food wastage and environmental protection issues. We will arrange student tours for education purposes upon request.”

Schools have also developed a Food Waste Conversion System by funding from the Environment and Conservation Fund, provided by the Hong Kong Productivity Council.

Kenny Wong Siu-wai, Principal Consultant of Environmental Management of the council said, “This system can convert a maximum of



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The quantity of meals may be too much for most students nowadays.



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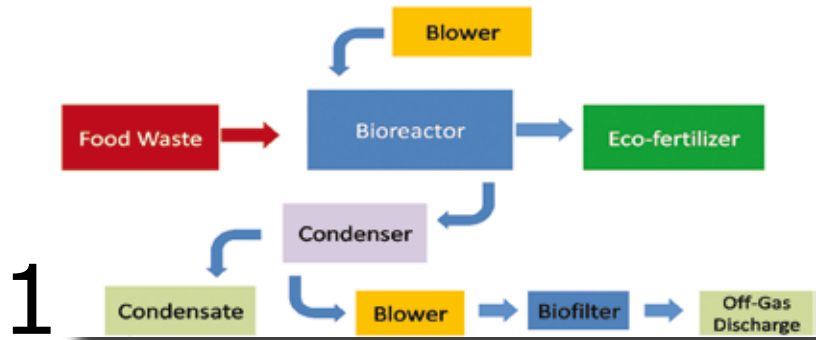
Gomixer, a food waste recycling machine introduced by Swire Properties, located at Festival Walk.



JULIANNA OR

“Finishing off all dishes is civilized behaviour,” said Mr Kwong Wah-on, the Assistant General Manager of Hoover Restaurant.

JULIANNA OR



20 kilograms of kitchen waste into organic fertilizers, which can then be used for gardening purposes.”

According to Mr Wong, educational programmes on how to handle and manage kitchen waste can also be developed by using the fund. “Putting what have been learnt into practice is just as important as gaining knowledge from books,” said Wong.

“We also hope that the participating students can carry these green ideas to their families, friends and even the whole society in the long run,” Wong said.

Recycling firm Green Idea suggests that the government provide financial support to waste management companies. “Financial support from the government, like a favourable rent or low interest loan, is very important to us. Our operating cost can be greatly reduced with the help of the government,” said Kowloon Wong Yuk-chun, owner of the company.

“If there is no profit, no one will be interested in entering the environmental-protection-oriented industry,” he said.

Mr Wong added that part of the food waste they collect is recycled for local poultry farms while the rest is sent to the Kowloon Bay Waste Recycling Centre, a Pilot Plant established by the government last year, which provides data for designing an organic waste treatment facilities to be constructed in Siu Ho Wan on Lantau Island in the future. ▼



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- 1 Flow schematic of a food waste conversion system (materials from the Hong Kong Productivity Council).
- 2 Appearance of a food waste conversion system located at the Hong Kong Productivity Council.
- 3 Recycling Process of Food waste in Green idea.