

June 18th 2020

Think Tank #2

The carbon
footprint of our
food



G.R.E.E.N. Hospitality

Outcomes and Action Plan



We are what we eat

Together with 16 stakeholders, we discussed the carbon footprint of our food, purposely leaving out the subject of meat as this would be a topic of its own.

Our attendees were restaurateurs, sustainability leads in hotel groups, local and urban farmers, composting tech, and food banks.

With yet another vast topic, we divided the subject into three subcategories, each time openly discussing bottlenecks and their solutions:

Local and urban
farming

Repurposing

Composting and
disposal

Who was there?



Bottlenecks

Local and urban farming

Besides its small and decentralised traditional farming, Hong Kong innovates with indoor and rooftop farming.

but...

Restaurants feel uneasy ordering as the availability and quality of produce from local farmers is highly dependent on the weather and the seasons, making the supply uncertain and irregular.



Bottlenecks

Repurposing

There are several charities in Hong Kong redistributing uneaten food to those in need

but...

Misconceptions about “expiration” dates and “best-by” dates sadly directs food to landfills without ever reaching those organisations.

Oftentimes, chefs and food retailers fear legal or reputational repercussions, should the donated food be of lesser or quality.



Bottlenecks

Composting and disposal

Mechanical and traditional composters and food digesters can prevent food waste from reaching landfills, where it globally contributes to 8% of greenhouse gas emissions.

but...

Segregation is a problem for composting. Whether done mechanically or traditionally, the quality of the soil depends on the type of food waste used to create it. In order to collect the right type of food waste, a business model or a collaborative system needs to be created to make it work.

Food digesters will turn food waste into drain water, and will not produce any useful material.





Action plans

#1 Pilot composting scheme

Pilot a project for selected restaurants to join a composting network.

Food waste would be picked up, go through a first mechanical composting followed by traditional composting. The soil would be then used by urban farms to grow their vegetables, which will then either be sold back to the restaurants or donated to food charities.



Action plans

#2 Strengthen local farming networks

Second action plan will be to create a HK restaurant initiative, where willing restaurants will work with a network of local farmers to purchase only one type of produce that can be provided throughout the year reliably.



Action plans

#3 Recycling vegetable scraps

We would also like to find a way to create a collaborative network to pick up vegetable scraps from restaurants who wish to recycle. In order for this to work, a solid business model will need to be created.



Thank you!

Now let's work on
this together!

G.R.E.E.N. Hospitality Think Tanks