



TIA is a joint venture of the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government

Thursday 25 July 2019

Tasmania's ag industry teams up in war on waste

Tasmania's agriculture industry is getting proactive about finding solutions to reduce on-farm food loss.

Around 60 people across the sector met at an industry-initiated forum in Longford today to develop a roadmap for future-proofing the industry.

The forum was the brainchild of a group of industry movers and shakers, including Eat Well Tasmania, MacTavish West, Optimum Standard, RDS Partners and the Tasmanian Fruit and Vegetable Export Facilitation Group, and was sponsored by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA).

Eat Well Tasmania State Manager Ms Leah Galvin said the forum aimed to get the right people in the room to explore the opportunities and roadblocks for the Tasmanian food sector.

"There have been a lot of conversations around this, and we thought it was time to bring people from across the industry together for a facilitated and solutions-focused discussion," Ms Galvin said.

"Our aim is to find new ways to make sure nutritious Tasmanian-grown food that is fit for consumption can get in the hands of consumers, rather than lost on the farm."

Food waste is a global problem with social, economic and environmental impacts, and on-farm food losses are a big part of the challenge.

In Australia, up to 25 per cent of all vegetables produced don't leave the farm, and the estimated total cost of agricultural food losses to farmers is \$2.84 billion.

"On-farm losses are a complex problem that needs a range of solutions, from value-adding and new product development to contract management," said Ms Galvin.

"It's not just about food losses. It's also about the livelihoods of our producers – the input costs are still the same whether a crop is sold or not."

The forum brought together a critical mass of people from across the sector, including those working in large-scale processing, production, business development and research.

Participants heard about challenges and opportunities identified by local businesses, including Houston's Farm, Simplot and Burlington Berries.

Acting TIA Director Professor Ted Lefroy said the forum was an important step to progress real solutions.

"We need strong, resilient food systems in place to reduce the environmental and financial impacts of food waste and ensure our industry is sustainable into the future," Professor Lefroy said.

"The forum was a fantastic opportunity to get some of the key people in a room and identify practical solutions to meet the challenges head-on."

Media contact:

Leah Galvin

Leah@eatwelltas.org.au

0425 723 409

Information released by:

Communications and Media Office

University of Tasmania

+61 3 6226 2124

Media.Office@utas.edu.au

[Twitter.com/utas_newsroom](https://twitter.com/utas_newsroom)