

Great haggis takeaway highlights food waste solutions

Haggis manufacturer Macsweens will show businesses how to stop food waste disposal biting into their profits when its environmental initiatives are featured in a major event next month (June).

In its latest green move the Loanhead, Midlothian-based firm, which makes 800 tonnes of haggis and black pudding a year, has joined the Cyrenians Organics Recycling Enterprise (CORE) food and catering waste collection project in Edinburgh.

The project - which raises funds to help the homeless - will annually collect 20 tonnes of Macsweens' natural casing trimmings and kitchen waste and have it composted for use as a fertiliser on farm fields.

The 'Food Waste Synergy Workshop' will take place on Tuesday 2 June at the capital's Prestonfield Hotel, which recycles food and organic waste and is experimenting with growing produce on-site. The event is organised by the Business Environment Partnership (BEP) and National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP Scotland).

Food can constitute as much as 70% of the waste generated from some businesses.

Macsweens already works with BEP through its Environment Placement Programme under which university students are matched with businesses during the Summer to improve their environmental practices. Students working under the programme at Macsweens have identified energy reduction measures and implemented recommendations from environmental audits.

Currently the firm recycles some 88% of its production waste, including fats recovered from the cooking process which are turned into biodiesel. This significantly reduces Macsweens' landfill costs, which can be between £60 and £100 per tonne.

"As a responsible manufacturer we don't want to put waste into a hole in the ground - it's expensive and eats up profits," James Macsween commented. "Good environmental systems can save businesses significant money."

The firm also tries to generate less waste by using less packaging and has introduced a range of energy-saving measures. Climate Change Levy (CCL) threshold targets have been met and carbon emissions reduced despite increased production. Two thirds of its employees use public transport, cycle or walk to work.

"It's not difficult to achieve, just common sense," James Macsween added. "We're passionate about our green standards. It's in our DNA to take a responsible approach to environmental management."

He added that the company recently won a contract from a food catering company because it was considered to be more environmentally-minded than competitors.

Ann Picking of NISP Scotland, a business opportunity programme funded by the Scottish

Government, commented: “With the establishment of CORE alongside new composting solutions, businesses should not only be able to reduce their landfill tonnages and costs but also enhance their corporate and social responsibility.”

The ‘Food Waste Synergy Workshop’ will be held from 9.30 am to 1.30 pm on Tuesday 2 June at Prestonfield Hotel, Edinburgh.

For more information or to book a place call Aimee Weatherburn of the Business Environment Partnership on 0131-561 6270 or email aimee@thebep.org.uk.

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