

Reducing Food Waste in Ontario's Produce Industry PROJECT UPDATE

For Immediate Release (Toronto, ON) – June 14, 2017

In January, The Ontario Produce Marketing Association (OPMA) announced the launch of a premier project in North America – tackling food loss and waste (FLW) to improve the efficiencies of Ontario's produce industry. OPMA and Value Chain Management International (VCMi) have partnered in this food waste reduction initiative to raise industry awareness and create the skills required to measurably reduce FLW along the produce value chain: from grower, packer, shipper, wholesaler, distributor, retailer or foodservice establishment, through to the consumer.

OPMA and VCMi, with the help of chosen industry leaders and OPMA members, have created a series of materials and daily management tools that have been shared via a number of workshops, attended by over 80 people. An important insight gained from feedback was the need to highlight how the tools and techniques presented at the workshops can help businesses reduce all types of waste, not just food waste, recognizing that food waste is a symptom of wider opportunities to improve business performance.

On behalf of OPMA, VCMi has been developing a number of case studies involving the produce supply chain. These, when completed, will be published and provide a greater understanding of how the produce business can benefit from reducing FLW. The following are a couple of key highlights ascertained from the studies:

1. Within the potato industry: a 29 percent increase in pack-out rate, achieved through managing the determinates of quality and value, equated to a 74 percent rise in grower margin; and
2. Within food distribution: when credits are provided, this can cost businesses more than twice the value of the food item itself.

The next workshop, to be held in Toronto, is taking place on **June 28**. To register or learn more, please contact nicole@vcm-international.com. Updates will also be made as the project progresses at theopma.ca.

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