

#EUCircularTalks

Circular Bioeconomy Value Chains: Insights and Best Practices



#CEstakeholderEU

European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

A joint initiative by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee



Main results:

- In 2019, the city estimated that approximately 1 700 tonnes of food were redistributed, equivalent to over 900 tonnes of CO₂ emissions avoided
- Milan claims to be the largest European city that has adopted a door-to-door waste collection system
- The organic fraction collected reached 15 000 tonnes in 2019, from which it is possible to produce 22 000 tonnes of agricultural compost and 8 million cubic metres of biomethane.

Milan: Collaborating to change local food systems

Description:

The Municipality of Milan, with the Cariplo Foundation, has decided to commit to making its food system more equitable and sustainable by adopting its own Food Policy.

The strategy guided city policies relating to food from 2015 to 2020. It set out five priorities:

- Health: ensuring healthy and sustainable food is available for all parts of the city, especially for vulnerable citizens
- Sustainable agriculture: facilitating access to land, promoting urban agriculture/horticulture, and supporting innovation
- Education: teaching people about healthy, sustainable diets
- Reducing waste: by reducing surpluses, promoting recovery and redistribution, and closing cycles through the circular economy and bioeconomy
- Agri-food research: involving universities, research and training centres, and public, private and non-profit organisations.

The municipality provides support and promotes social, technological and organisational innovation in line with the principles set out in the Food Policy.

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AgriChemWhey: transforming dairy waste into new added-value products

Description:

Following the abolition of European milk quotas in 2015, farmers are now able to produce more dairy products. However, the by-products of milk processing – whey permeate (WP) and de-lactosed permeate (DLP) – are difficult to dispose of sustainably, posing a major issue for the dairy industry.

Taking up this challenge, the AgriChemWhey project brings together 11 partners from 5 EU countries with the aim of building a **first-of-a-kind bio-refinery**, capable of transforming over 25,000 tonnes of excess WP and DLP per annum into lactic acid. This lactic acid can in turn be used to make **value-added bio-based products** for growing global markets, including biodegradable plastics, bio-based fertiliser and other minerals.

This plastic could be used to package dairy products produced by farms, while the bio-based fertiliser could be used for mushroom cultivation. Such an approach is a zero-waste process, closing the loop and promoting the circular economy.

AgriChemWhey hopes to replicate its model across other European regions.

