SHORT CASE STUDY

Co-funded by the European Union

Sint-Maria Halle
ALGEMEEN ZIEKENHUIS

FOODWIN

Introduction

AZ Sint-Maria Halle has embarked on an ambitious journey to reduce food waste, recognizing its significant environmental and economic impact. The baseline measurement conducted in October 2024 served as a critical starting point, identifying key areas of concern and opportunities for improvement. This report details the findings from the baseline measurement and outlines the action plan designed to reduce food waste by 30% by the end of 2025.

Measurement Summery

TThe analysis covered warm meals for patients and food waste generated in various parts of the hospital, including all departments, the kitchen, the staff restaurant, and the cafeteria.

Key Findings

1. Total Food Waste:
   - Annual food waste: 19,000 kg, representing 14.2% of total production.
   - Average waste per patient: 0.123 kg per day.
2. Waste Distribution:
   - Departments: 9.7% of production wasted.
   - Kitchen and Cafeteria: 4.5% of production wasted.
3. Economic and Environmental Impact:
   - Annual financial loss: €39,000.
   - Environmental cost: 59 tons of CO2 emissions annually.
4. Critical Areas of Concern:
   - High Departmental Waste: Geriatrics recorded the highest waste, with 1,693.6 kg annually, equating to an average of 200g per patient per day.
   - Excess Reservemeals: On average, 8 trays per day are wasted from reservemeals, amounting to 3,432 trays annually.

nsights from Daily Trends

Waste analysis revealed variations by day, with notable spikes on specific days due to factors like menu popularity, production misalignments, or changes in patient numbers. For instance, waste was lowest on Sundays, likely due to better menu selection and accurate patient counts.

Action Plan

Objective: Achieve a **30% reduction** in food waste by Q4 2025, ensuring consistent progress through short-, medium-, and long-term actions.

Short-Term Actions (Quick Wins):

- **Portion Size Adjustments:** Reduce the size of puree portions to match consumption patterns better.
- **Improved Communication Protocols:** Implement systems for real-time updates on fasting and discharged patients to prevent unnecessary meal preparation.
- **Staff Training:** Conduct workshops to enhance awareness and skill-building around meal planning, waste tracking, and portion control.

Mid-Term Actions:

- **Menu Optimization:** Redesign menus to align with dietary guidelines and patient preferences, reducing overproduction and enhancing satisfaction.
- **Pilot Programs:**
  - Introduce Protected Meal Times to minimize interruptions during meals.
  - Implement initiatives like Too Good To Go for surplus food, starting with soup distribution.
- **Geriatric Focus:** Tailored interventions for geriatrics, such as finger foods and better mealtime support, to address high waste levels in this department.

Long-Term Strategies:

- **Digital Solutions:** Leverage tools like C-meal to streamline food production and inventory management.
- **Sustainability Culture:** Build ongoing awareness through training, positive reinforcement, and recognition of progress.
- **Regular Impact Monitoring:** Establish biannual reviews to assess progress and recalibrate strategies as needed.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges:

- **Fear of Shortages:** A tendency to overproduce meals as a safety measure, leading to significant waste.
- **Logistical Hurdles:** Difficulties in predicting patient numbers accurately due to dynamic hospital operations.

Opportunities:

- **Cost Savings:** Potential for substantial financial savings by reducing waste and optimizing resources.
- **Engaged Workforce:** A committed team and leadership ready to implement innovative solutions for sustainability.

Next Steps

1. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Share results from the nulmeting and action plan with all involved parties, emphasizing a collaborative approach.
2. **Initiation of Quick Wins:** Start implementing short-term actions immediately to gain momentum and early results.
3. **Regular Feedback Loops:** Establish a reporting structure to ensure progress is tracked and adjustments are made in real-time.

Conclusion

AZ Sint-Maria Halle's food waste percentage is below the average for hospitals, largely due to its smaller size and proactive measures implemented by the logistics manager. Inspired by previous measurement initiatives and informational sessions conducted by FoodWIN, the hospital has already taken meaningful steps to reduce waste. The recent detailed measurement provided a deeper understanding of food waste in specific departments, enabling more targeted interventions.
As the hospital continues to implement its comprehensive action plan, it aims to conduct follow-up measurements to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives.