



Dear friends,

28th March 2012

Just recently our charity held its first meeting regarding food waste and other issues in general. I am writing this letter more about food waste in rural Scottish communities and the Scottish Highlands & Islands.

Over the last two years we have been looking into re-cycling and food waste in general, and what we can do to help our environment and stop land refill.

Due to the current economic climate in Scotland, especially in small communities in local areas, our charity has been allocating some of our overseas food to families, elderly and others due to e.g. rising household bills and ever increasing fuel prices, which seem to be increasing each day, and rising food prices in the supermarkets.

We have carried out an independent survey at several supermarkets, and quite a number of the large and medium large ones have policies in place to stop food waste. Did you know that in Scotland we bin more than £1 billion in food alone each year? This is around £430 per household.

Over the years, we as customers have become laid back, and have given the supermarkets the powers to rule our daily lives, as well as our spending. In return the supermarkets are offering us convenient shopping with large variety of products. Online business is growing. This is due to the rising fuel costs we all currently need to pay to run our cars.

Regarding rural communities, the main food suppliers are the CO-OP stores which we all together own and get our dividend vouchers from when we shop with them. Not having competition in rural communities gives the CO-OP freedom to sell us products like any other supermarket can do, only what is striking is the large price differences between their shops located only some 8 -10 miles apart from each other, which is becoming hard to understand.

Why should each community pay different prices for the same food or products sold in these shops? We are still trying to get an answer, or maybe the fuel prices have gone up again in our neighbouring communities?

Another amazing aspect is the fact that this supermarket brands itself as eco-friendly and is looking after our wellbeing and supporting the local communities, donating part of the profits to local charities and more to be honest looking around my community I do not see much of these things happening, and I wonder if any of my neighbours or other locals do?

Our survey also revealed the large volume of food, and we believe due to overstocking is binned each day by this supermarket (see some of the photographs)

It is amazing to see that daily fresh bake on and off bread is just been discarded at close of business, among other items. In an interview with several of the staff of the CO-OP, we were told, that due to legislation and health and safety, all food that reached its end of shelf had to be discarded. Looking at the larger supermarkets elsewhere in Scotland, quite a number have some brilliant policies in place.

One of them does, on the expiry date / end of shelf, the following:

If not sold by 12.00pm 50% discount

If not sold by 5.00pm 75% discount

If not sold by 7.00pm 90% discount

This supermarket showed us records, and the food waste is almost zero, as all items are normally sold.

Another has a recycling agreement with a pet and animal food manufacturer another way in dealing with food waste, and indirectly goes back into the food chain, and at the same time helps reduce land refill

A medium size supermarket chain, has a policy that on the day the food will reach it's end of shelf date, to offer these on tables as freebies to the customers at manager's discretion, again, another great idea in helping people who are struggling to get some food.

I could go on with a few more, but the point I am making is, that in our rural Scottish Highlands & Islands communities, food waste on a large scale is a crime, and the CO-OP should start thinking about food waste and land refill in Scotland as well as poverty and a number of current issues.

It is quite normal and easy practise to pay food waste companies e.g. BINN SKIPS to collect your discarded large volume out of date food, but this does not have to be the case, especially the large quantities which are collected each week by these companies.

Let us not forget, that at the present time in Perthshire alone, some 16,000 plus people go to bed hungry each night and un-employment is around 11,000 and rising.

Our charity is carrying out a feasibility study to see how we can start to set up a food bank to help those that in need, and play our part in these communities.

Yours truly,

Billy

Director / Founder

**Humanos Aid International,
3 Creag Eilid, Grandtully
Aberfeldy, Perthshire, Scotland. PH15 2QR
Office: 01887 840278 | Mob: 07845 019709
e-mail: hai@humanos.org.uk | web: www.humanos.org.uk
Registered Scottish Charity: SC042807**