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Sustainable Food Awareness Network (S-FAN): Study Design and Preliminary Results on Household Food Waste

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Abstract

The Sustainable Food Awareness Network (S-FAN) is a 24-month project aimed at reducing food waste in Greece through education, community engagement, and innovative communication technologies. S-FAN develops an integrated set of interventions, including educational videos, a social media campaign, podcasts, infographics, community workshops, webinars, research kit for educators, AR/VR technology and a documentery film that illustrates the journey of food “from farm to plate” and emphasizes sustainable dietary patterns. These actions target diverse groups, general public, educators, students, health professionals, and apprentice chefs, providing practical skills in meal planning, food storage, and waste reduction. Collaboration with schools, libraries, and community centers enhances outreach and ensures long-term sustainability. In addition, food waste will be measured in 100 families in Athens and Peloponnese while assessing the nature of food waste, the degree of food processing with the use of NOVA categorisation and knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants regarding food waste (through questionnaires). Preliminary results from 42 families in Athens and Peloponnese showed that the median total food waste over 14 days was 2,8 kg per famliy (median family members:2). The primary destination for waste was the trash bin while composting was rarely used. Finally, the majority of discarded food items fell into the NOVA 1 processing category, i.e. unprocessed foods (median value: 1,883.5 grams). Meal planning was negatively associated with food waste from NOVA 1 foods (spearman rho = −0.321, p = 0.041), indicating that households with more consistent meal planning reported lower waste of minimally processed foods. In addition, a positive correlation was observed between consumers' understanding of expiration date labels and food waste due to product expiration (spearman rho = 0.325, p = 0.038), suggesting that greater perceived understanding may be associated with stricter adherence to expiration dates and increased disposal of expired products.By generating scientific data, digital strategies, and fostering community-based change, S-FAN aspires to serve as a model for future food-waste prevention initiatives and to contribute to national and international sustainability goals.

Keywords: community program, food waste

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