

## Food Waste: Creating a Better Way for Life Jerome Peribere, CEO Sealed Air Corporation



As organizations around the world collaborate to address climate issues, how can we re-imagine opportunities to bring new insights and renewed energy to make a difference? One such opportunity to make a difference is food waste. Those who have done business with me know I hate waste in all forms. In fact, it is a passion for how I run business because I believe eliminating waste, whether it is wasted materials or wasted time, can be achieved by making waste prevention a priority.

I bring the same philosophy to how the world feeds itself – Food. – Waste – and Sustainability. Consider these three pressing issues facing our food supply chain that we need to address – for reasons both altruistic and economic:

- Food Access: We are producing more than enough food to feed the planet, yet hundreds of millions of people starve;
- Food Safety: We have made significant advances in technology and distribution, but food contamination is still a large societal problem with fatal consequences regardless of wealth;
- And Food Waste: We are more conscious of the impact our actions have on the environment, yet we throw away billions of tons of food a year that could feed hungry people.

We urgently need innovative solutions and collaborative actions to take on these enormous challenges. We can't overcome these challenges with old thinking. And I say **“urgently.”**

- Urgent because – increased population and consumption will require at least 50% more food by 2030. That food must increasingly be distributed from all over the world. Examining every step in the food supply chain – from farm to fork as they say – there is the risk for contamination, damage and waste.
- Urgent because – millions of people become ill every year and many die from unsafe food. Food borne and waterborne diarrheal diseases taken together kill about 2.2 million people annually, 1.9 million of them children. Increasing urbanization is expected to increase foodborne illnesses.
- Urgent because – at least 40% of the food we produce is never consumed. The water, energy and resources used to produce this food are wasted. In addition, food waste that decomposes in landfills is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions.

We are at a crossroads for balancing sustainable business, caring for the environment, and the ability to adequately feed the world's people. This is something Sealed Air, my colleagues in the food industry, and the world at large have been grappling with for some time. The challenge is not new. The challenge now is not just to do more of the same. The challenge is to embrace a new way of thinking for sustainability.

Let me tell you about some of the things Sealed Air is doing to address these challenges. We are integrating sustainability as part of our business. We are addressing food waste by following three paths – collaboration, innovation and education.

For collaboration, we can all make inroads by working together to understand where and how food is being wasted. We look beyond the single product or service to consider the value chain where the solution is part of a broader lifecycle involving sourcing, distribution, use and even disposal. By doing so, we improve **access** to a more **secure** food supply chain – one that is safer and more nutritious; more efficient and less wasteful. For example, we have seen how efficient production methods for foods such as beef, pork and chicken, coupled with our packaging, cleaning and hygiene solutions, can reduce waste across global supply chains while meeting demands for proteins in urban areas.

Innovation plays a vital role in preventing food from going to waste. Packaging technologies that extend shelf life, reduce damage or help consumers to portion or reseal foods, have all been shown to reduce food spoilage during distribution, allowing customers to grow their businesses and, especially, to reduce the amount of food that may be wasted by the consumer. Use of packaging technologies such as modified atmosphere packaging, for produce and baked goods, leads to significant extension in the time that foods can remain fresh.

Education is essential. From production to consumption, understanding the factors that lead to food contamination and spoilage can dramatically reduce illness and prevent food from spoiling before it can be consumed. For example, better labeling to communicate the best way to store various food products, or how long foods remain safe to eat, can reduce waste in our households.

We apply this strategy as broadly as possible – with a focus on helping all people live healthier and eat better. And when we apply this approach on a global scale, we are not only assuring our long term future by keeping our local communities thriving, we are encouraging and strengthening developing regions of the world. We are finding that appropriate balance of the nexus between food, energy and the use of our natural resources. This is what sustainability is all about. Our business is not just products and services, but is actually **sustainability** and our overriding goal is to create a better way for life. This is how we think, and how we act each and every day at Sealed Air.

Sealed Air Corporation creates a world that feels, tastes and works better. In 2014, the Company generated revenue of approximately \$7.8 billion by helping our customers achieve their sustainability goals in the face of today's biggest social and environmental challenges. Our portfolio of widely recognized brands, including Cryovac® brand food packaging solutions, Bubble Wrap® brand cushioning and Diversey® cleaning and hygiene solutions, ensures a safer and less wasteful food supply chain, protects valuable goods shipped around the world, and improves health through clean environments. Sealed Air has approximately 24,000 employees who serve customers in 175 countries. To learn more, visit [www.sealedair.com](http://www.sealedair.com).