

Pick n Pay launches zero-waste supermarket store

Pick n Pay has launched its first zero-waste supermarket pilot in Cape Town, reinforcing its commitment to reducing food waste.



Pick n Pay pilots first zero-waste supermarket, with food waste diverted from landfill to Farmer Angus. Image supplied

The pilot tests a net-zero waste model by diverting food waste to local farmers, composters or waste-to-energy facilities. All edible surplus food – food that has passed its sell-by date but not its use-by date – is already donated to FoodForward SA, which feeds almost a million people daily through 2,750 beneficiary organisations.

We hope to replicate the model in more stores nationwide, with plans already in the pipeline to extend the concept to its distribution centres.

Pick n Pay Stellenbosch Square is piloting the model, and the store has partnered with supplier Farmer Angus, diverting approximately 600 kg of food waste per week from landfills. This is expected to save 1,500 kilograms of carbon emissions weekly – which is equivalent to a savings of 7,000kms of emissions from a standard petrol car.



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29 Sep 2023



Steffen Burrows, sustainability manager at Pick n Pay, says this model will mitigate harmful environmental effects of waste disposal while creating a virtuous cycle supporting local agriculture.

“Food waste is a significant contributor to carbon emissions. The partnership with Farmer Angus will see the nearby store’s

expired food waste diverted from landfills to Farmer Angus's pigs, effectively turning waste into a valuable resource for farmers," says Burrows.



Promoting a circular economy - Farmer Angus products stocked on the shelf at Pick n Pay. Image supplied

Participating in the circular economy

He says this innovative initiative grows Pick n Pay's participation in the circular economy. "We are repurposing organic waste as animal feed, effectively closing the loop on waste generation and consumption. What brings this project even more full circle is that we stock Farmer Angus' products on our shelves."

Angus McIntosh, the owner of Farmer Angus, says, “his pigs are delighted with their new varied diet, which varies from fruit and vegetables to expired doughnuts”. “Not only do the pigs that eat the food waste become cured meat sold in Pick n Pay stores, but expired food is no longer going to landfill, which means that no methane will be discharged into the atmosphere from the food waste. Methane has 25 times the global warming potential of CO₂.”



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Farmer Angus, a renowned grass-fed beef and pork farm that follows regenerative agricultural principles and practices, is passionate about reversing climate change. Their efforts to farm with nature – rather than against it – saw them become one of the first farms in the world to be paid carbon credits in 2014 for increasing the carbon contents in the pastures where its cattle graze.

Carbon footprint reduction

“This pilot transcends carbon footprint reduction. This brings a new era of conscious consumerism, environmental stewardship, and community collaboration. By collaborating with Farmer Angus on this pilot, we are aligning our efforts to magnify the positive impact we can make on the environment,” says Burrows.

Staff at Pick n Pay Stellenbosch Square will separate food and organic waste from general waste and recyclables. All food not donated for human consumption is placed into separate bins, de-packaged in the waste service area, and sent to Farmer Angus. This includes all food except pork products, for which the retailer is trialing a composting solution as part of the pilot.

“We want this pilot will serve as a blueprint for future sustainability endeavours across our stores and beyond,” concludes Burrows.

This initiative forms part of the Pick n Pay Group’s commitment to reducing food waste and its environmental impact. The retailer has set a goal to reduce food waste in its organisation by 50% by 2030, and last year, Pick n Pay successfully diverted 62% of food waste from landfills through donations and prevented surplus food from going to waste.

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