

Driving action to cut out food waste

VIBES Awards recognise organisations that are focused on reducing their environmental impact

Food waste is a planet-sized problem. Every year, the world wastes an estimated 1.3 billion tonnes of food, generating about 8 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

In Scotland, household food waste alone accounts for 2.24 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, representing 2.9 per cent of Scotland's carbon footprint.

Under its Food Waste Reduction Action Plan, the Scottish Government has committed to reducing food waste per person in Scotland by 33 per cent by 2025.

"This target was the first of its kind in Europe and recognises the critical role of food waste reduction in the fight against climate change and the transition to a more circular, resource efficient economy," says Iain Gulland, chief executive of Zero Waste Scotland, a leader in the drive to reduce the problem in Scotland.

"Food waste sent to landfill is particularly problematic as it releases methane, a greenhouse gas many times more potent than carbon dioxide.

"In 2016, 1.15 million tonnes of biodegradable waste – food waste and other organic waste such as garden waste – was sent to landfill in Scotland. This was a 43 per cent reduction over ten years, but is still a challenging volume that must be reduced."

Zero Waste Scotland is a partner in the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards, which recognises organisations that are taking significant steps to improve or reduce their impact on the environment, typically making significant financial savings in the process.

Resource efficiency and reducing food waste are key priorities for a number of previous VIBES winners.

These include Farne Salmon, which manufactures smoked and cooked salmon products and employs more than 700 staff at its Duns site in the Scottish Borders.

Since 2014, the company has cut its food waste by about one-fifth, by using more of each fish it processes and throwing away less.

"Minimising our impact on the natural resources we use on a daily



Farne Salmon in the Borders has slashed its waste by one-fifth in five years

basis – namely raw materials, water and energy – has been a strong focus for the business in recent years," says Angus Forbes, environment

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and projects manager at Farne Salmon.

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"Our engagement and success with the VIBES awards in recent years has been a great help in encouraging and guiding us to grow with this goal in mind."

Another previous VIBES winner, The Bay Fish and Chips in Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire, has won multiple awards for its food and dedication to sustainability.

"All food waste is collected and recycled into compost, while waste cooking oil is uplifted and converted into biofuel – no by-product is wasted," explains the company's founder, Calum Richardson.

Using specialist technology from Kinross-based Peel Tech – another previous VIBES winner – even the starch from potatoes used by The Bay Fish and Chips is collected and passed on to a Scottish pig farmer to help feed his livestock.

Since their inception in 1999, the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards have recognised and rewarded more than 150 businesses that have championed sustainability.

The VIBES Awards are run in a strategic partnership between the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, the Scottish Government, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Highland and Islands Enterprise, Zero Waste Scotland, Energy Saving Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage. *Find out more about the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards at www.vibes.org.uk*