



Press Release
20th January 2020

SRA goes digital to help canteens and workplace restaurants serve up tasty solutions to combat climate change

Two university canteens and two workplace restaurants are at the centre of a major, new and innovative European project to shift people towards diets healthier for them and the planet that has the potential to cut greenhouse gas emissions and water use significantly in commercial kitchens across the continent.

SU-Eatable Life, funded by the European Commission's LIFE fund, and designed and delivered in the UK by the Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA), is the most long-term and in-depth experiment to date to change the eating habits of thousands of students and employees, using a combination of creative menu design, rewards, data collection and social media.

The SRA and its partners in the project, Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition, Wageningen University, and tech provider greenApes believe this menu of behaviour change tools can help at least 5,000 customers better understand what a sustainable diet looks like and make menu choices that deliver significant annual reductions in CO₂, 5,300 tonnes, and water, 2million cubic meters. Rolled out across the European Union this could deliver savings of almost two weeks of the UK's total water supply – 200 billion litres - and 50% more than the UK's entire net CO₂ emissions - 535Mt.

Students at University of Worcester, City University of London, and employees at two workplace sites managed by caterers Artizian and Fooditude, will be encouraged and educated, in part using the greenApes app. Engaging video content, easy to access information about focus areas, including the environmental impact of common ingredients, health, water, and waste, monthly rewards and opportunities to share content, are just some of the ways the app will engage users.

Chefs at the four sites have had months to hone their climate-friendly dishes, meeting the required specifications of the SRA's One Planet Plate. These are identified as such on menus, helping canteen users identify and choose dishes with a lower impact on the environment, like veg-led dishes. Point of sale marketing will also be used extensively at the sites to highlight the benefits of making better food choices.

The predicted move towards more sustainable diets will be measured by shifts in both sales and procurement, using November's equivalent data as a baseline. The project will be live for four months in the university canteens and six months in the workplace restaurants.

Swati Deshpande, Marketing Manager of [Fooditude](#), said: "We are thrilled to be part of a significant study that will help shape sustainable diets and make a significant contribution to lowering carbon emissions and impact on the environment. To us, success would be twofold – to get more of our diners interested in swapping to plant based alternatives and to change chef attitudes towards cooking more interesting vegetarian foods and make them an attractive alternative to a meaty meal."

Rob Kurz, Foodologist at [Artizian](#), said: "For us, success would be achieving tangible reductions in the menu-related carbon footprint without necessarily forcing customers to eat specific dishes, but through educating and inspiring them to join us on the journey."

Andrew Stephen, Chief Executive of the SRA, said the project complemented its ongoing and well-established work to support foodservice to help their customers eat their way to a better food future by sourcing and serving environmentally restorative dishes.

He added: "Two years in the planning and working both with our project partners in Europe as well as the four participating sites, we believe we've created a programme that will demonstrate it is possible to effect significant changes in eating habits with positive outcomes for canteen and workplace restaurant users and the planet. We are confident that we will also learn the most effective ways of achieving these changes to eating habits which offers huge potential for wider impact, creating delicious solutions to climate change."

The canteens at the Barilla pasta factory, Ducati motorbike works, and Parma University will be participating simultaneously in Italy.

The project is coordinated by Prof. Riccardo Valentini, Full Professor of Forest Ecology at Tuscia University, Italy, member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2007.

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Notes to Editors

Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA)

The SRA is a not for profit membership organisation. Since 2010, it's been supporting the foodservice sector to tackle the complex and urgent problems facing the food system and diners make more sustainable choices when dining out.

www.thesra.org

@the_sra

LIFE is the EU financial instrument supporting environmental and climate action projects throughout the EU. Since 1992, LIFE has co-financed more than 4,500 projects. For the 2014-2020 funding period, LIFE will contribute approximately €3.4 billion to the protection of the environment and climate.

<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>

The Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition Foundation (BCFN) is an independent multidisciplinary research centre, which aims to provide People, Institutions and Media with activities and scientifically robust analysis related to food and its relationships with societies and environment.

<https://www.barillacfn.com/en/>

greenApes is a Benefit Corporation which activities have the purpose of promoting sustainable lifestyles. In the greenApes app, users share their green ideas, actions and tips with the community. Doing so they inspire each other and get rewarded with eco-friendly gifts and discounts.

<https://www.greenapes.com/en/>

Wageningen University is the leading EU university in the Life Sciences. Researchers and students at University focus on the field of nutrition, health, nature and the living environment. The chair-group Health and Society, department of Social Science is specialized in innovative approaches in health and nutrition promotion.

<https://www.wur.nl/en/wageningen-university.htm>

Further quotes:

“Through this project we are hoping to educate our students and colleagues about the environmental and health impact of food choices and generate an increased and ongoing demand for One Planet Plate food at our campus food outlets,” **Eleanor Simes**, [City, University of London](#)

[University of London](#)

“The University has been working with students to support sustainable food for a number of years, both in giving them access to local produce and providing students with the opportunities to grow their own in dedicated allotments. This project is an ideal opportunity to extend this work, with globally leading professors, achieving lasting embedded changes to both the consumers of food and drink on campus as well as the staff and external contractors who help us provide it,” **Katy Boom**, **Director of Sustainability**, [University of Worcester](#).

[Worcester](#).