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SNP MEP calls for more EU action to tackle food waste

Speaking ahead of European Food Safety Day (Thursday 15 September), SNP MEP **Ian Hudghton** has called for the EU to do more to tackle the significant problem of food waste.

It is estimated that across Europe around 89 million tonnes of food goes to waste every year and this is expected to rise to 129 million tonnes by the end of the decade. The European Commission has decided to make tackling food waste the focus of this year's Food Safety Day in the hope of getting to grips with this growing problem.

Mr Hudghton praised the Scottish Government's initiatives to deal with the issue and invited the European Commissioner to visit and see local initiatives for himself. The Scottish Government is funding a £4million Food Waste Programme to encourage councils and businesses to reduce food waste. One scheme to benefit from the funding was launched this week and sees kerbside food waste collections being rolled out to 140,000 households in Edinburgh. The food collected will be recycled and turned into green energy.

In Scotland wasted food costs each household an average of £430 a year, with an estimated 341,000 tonnes being thrown away. A report earlier this year estimated that the hospitality sector in Scotland alone could save £64m a year by tackling food waste.

Commenting, Mr Hudghton said:

"Once again we see Scotland leading the way with these ambitious plans to reduce food waste, produce green energy, and move towards making Scotland a zero waste society. I'm very pleased that the European Commission is taking the issue seriously by focussing on food waste during this year's Food Safety Day.

"If Europe's Health Commissioner would like to visit Scotland, I'm sure he'd be more than welcome to see for himself our ambitious plans to deal with this.

"Many households still throw away a great deal of food and on average each household in Scotland discards around £430 worth of food annually. Reducing the amount of food we waste makes economic and environmental sense. Rather than being sent to landfill sites, waste food can be recycled and turned into green energy, thereby creating jobs, reducing CO2 and generating income. Education and awareness is also important to help us reduce the amount of food we throw away.

"I'm pleased that the European Commission has identified reducing food waste as a priority. They need to look at what practical support they can offer governments in taking this work forward."

Notes to editors

For more information on Europe's Food Safety Day visit
http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/598

For more information on food waste reduction initiatives in Scotland visit www.zerowastescotland.org.uk

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