

Driving Research & Innovation case study: Foodprint

A Nottingham social enterprise which helped to inspire the development of an award-winning sweet treat made using bread waste hopes that the product will one day appear on shop shelves.

The University of Nottingham student-led social enterprise Foodprint collects food that supermarkets would otherwise have thrown away and sells it via a 'social supermarket' in Sneinton as part of a surplus food redistribution network.

By far the biggest issue facing Foodprint when it comes to its own waste, however, is the problem of what to do with surplus bread that it cannot sell or redistribute.



About 90% of the organisation's waste is made up of bread and the issue of bread waste is a national problem for the food sector, with around one million loaves of bread thrown away in the UK every day. It's reckoned that between 34% and 44% of all bread produced is wasted.

And it was the challenge of how to re-use surplus bread at Foodprint – introduced by the Food Innovation Centre at the University of Nottingham's Sutton Bonington campus – which was the inspiration for five students in their final year studying food science and nutrition at the University.

They came up with a novel way to turn 'best before date' bread into a sweet treat based on the traditional Indian dessert Gulab Jamun and it recently won the annual Ecotrophelia UK competition, a national competition for the creation of eco-innovative food products organised jointly by the Institute of Food Science & Technology and Campden BRI.

The team created their 'Gulab Jamun' by exchanging flour for bread that had exceeded its best before date and in doing so created tasty, fried dough balls to which they added their own range of flavoured syrups.

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Now Chris Hyland, who runs Foodprint, hopes that the innovative product developed by the Nottingham students will one day go into production – helping to contribute to a reduction in bread waste.

“Using surplus bread to make a new product is something that’s not only applicable to us, here at Foodprint, but to the whole industry,” said Chris, a second-year economics student at the University of Nottingham.

“It helps tackle both the environmental side and the cost side of things, plus the social side – knowing it’s doing some good in the world.”

“Everybody in the industry is in favour of this sort of thing happening. It’s in nobody’s interest that bread is wasted. I can very clearly see this product working.”

The bread waste issue faced by Foodprint has been taken up by the Food Innovation Centre under the Driving Research and Innovation project funded by the [European Regional Development Fund](#) via D2N2.

It is a unique collaboration project that provides free specialist innovation support to small and medium-sized businesses.

Richard Worrall, who runs the Driving Research and Innovation project, said: “Bread waste is a big issue in the food sector and the Food Innovation Centre is delighted to have played a supporting role in this latest scheme which has invented an award-winning new dessert. The project had three exciting elements - a student social enterprise, bread waste valorisation and a group of food science students winning a national competition.

“The next step is to look at how this could be turned into a commercial product. Foodprint is a student social enterprise with limited funds and so we may need to turn to an industry partner to help them commercialise the product.”

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