



FOOD WASTE PREVENTION CASE STUDY

The Organization | **Berea College, Berea, KY**

The Berea College Dining Program is operated by Sodexo. As part of its commitment to reduce organic waste, support local communities and lower its carbon footprint, Sodexo implemented the LeanPath food waste prevention system in the Berea Mountaineer Dining Hall in March 2012.



The Challenge | **Serve More Local Foods without Increasing Costs**

Berea College students are passionate about sustainability and investing in local foods. The dining program wanted to offer its students more locally grown and raised foods, but these products are often more expensive. So the team looked for opportunities to cut costs and reinvest the saved money in the local foods program. They realized that there was a significant opportunity to reduce pre-consumer food waste or "kitchen waste."

The Solution | **Reduce Back-of-the-House Production Waste**

Berea College Dining had been weighing its pre- and post-consumer food waste for years in large batches. However, they did not have access to detailed information, such as the specific items being wasted, reasons, time of day, etc., until they installed the automated LeanPath food waste prevention system. The LeanPath system allowed them to quickly and efficiently weigh all of their pre-consumer kitchen waste with a scale connected to a touch-screen device. They upload that data to a reporting dashboard for a comprehensive view of total food waste and the ability to drill down into actionable details.

Quantifying Waste in Dollars to Increase Awareness

Berea staff had weighed waste before, but had never had a way to easily equate the food with a dollar amount. The LeanPath System, which quantifies the estimated value of all pre-consumer food being discarded, increased awareness of the value of food for both the management and front-line team which led to some creative ideas. Instead of using lettuce heads to decorate trays, they now use celery tops. Instead of discarding vegetable trimmings they use them to make sauces or salsas. If there's something left-over they can make use of safely, they work with the chefs to modify menus. The eye-opening dollar figures challenged the team to think strategically about production and safe re-use.

Creating a Waste-Fighting Culture

Sodexo shares LeanPath reports with Berea College dining leadership to diagnose issues and track progress. Every member of the Berea Dining team knows that they play a role. They incorporate waste data into their daily production meetings and team huddles. The production team receives an incentive when they reach waste reduction goals. There is a healthy competitiveness in the Berea kitchen that encourages every staff member to do their part to reduce waste.

The Results | **49% Reduction in Pre-Consumer Food Waste**

In less than one year of Sodexo implementing the LeanPath food waste prevention system, Berea College reduced its pre-consumer food waste by 49% year-over-year and lowered plate cost significantly. They have re-invested the savings to provide Berea students with a 4% increase in locally-grown foods without raising prices to students or increasing overall food costs.

"We're using our savings to invest in more local foods—from our own college and local producers. Our savings allow us to offer these high-quality local foods without increasing the cost to our students."

*Caitlin McClanahan,
Sustainability Manager*

"The system paid for itself in less than 10 months."

*David McHargue,
General Manager*

To learn more about LeanPath Food Waste Prevention Systems, visit www.leanpath.com or call (877) 620-6512.