

Gerda Verburg appointed as new chair of Food Waste Free United

Veghel, 27 September 2024 – Today, coinciding with the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, Food Waste Free United announces the appointment of Gerda Verburg as the new chair of its executive board. She will formally take over from current chairman Philip den Ouden on 2 December this year.

Since it was founded over five years ago, Food Waste Free United has succeeded in putting food waste on the agenda in the Netherlands, and made the Food Waste-Free Week a common concept which again reached millions of people this year. The ecosystem is in place, and we are seeing a systemic reduction in food waste in the Netherlands. Internationally, the foundation's approach increasingly serves as a leading example. Philip den Ouden was instrumental in founding the organisation. Having served two terms as chairman, it is his time to pass the baton to his successor. Philip den Ouden: "We are still missing an important part of the food chain to be even more successful and actually halve food waste by 2030 (SDG 12.3). Gerda's network in the agricultural sector will help to also engage farmers in tackling food waste. They don't see it as a priority right now, but there are a lot of gains to be made, both in reducing losses on the land and for their earnings model."

Valuable addition to the board

Having served as a Member of Parliament, Gerda Verburg acted as Minister for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in the Balkenende IV cabinet (2007-2010). She subsequently held a variety of international positions, including as ambassador for the UN food and agriculture organisations in Rome, chair of the UN food safety commission, and chair of the WEF Global Agenda Council for Food and Nutrition Security. In 2016, she was appointed by the Secretary-General of the UN as Assistant Secretary-General, working as global coordinator to lead the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement from Geneva. Gerda Verburg returned to the Netherlands in 2023 and holds a number of board positions. Commenting on her motivation to become chair of the board of Food Waste Free United, she says: "Preventing food waste is an absolute win:win. Avoiding waste means greater revenue and lower expenditure. It also supports sustainability, with reduced emissions, and improved production."

The Food Waste Free United team

The team that every day gets food waste onto various agendas, and works constantly to engage new members, is led by director Toine Timmermans: "We are delighted to welcome Gerda Verburg as the new chair of our board. Food security, even now, remains an important issue, and tackling food waste is an integral aspect of this. It's unacceptable when you think that (in the Netherlands too), some people still do not have access to sufficient, safe and healthy food. Her knowledge and network will enable us to make further progress in achieving our goal of 50% reduction by 2030."

In addition to the chairperson, the board of Food Waste Free United comprises Gerhard de Ruiter (WUR), Henk Flipsen (Nevedi), Irénke Meekma (RedStar) and Debora van der Zee-Denekamp (Unilever). Myriam Meertens acts as advisor to the board on behalf of the municipality of Meierijstad and the province of North Brabant.

Editor's note:

About Food Waste Free United

[Food Waste Free United](#) constitutes the definitive movement that brings together and accelerates all major initiatives and expertise for a waste-free Netherlands. Companies from the entire chain, governments and social organisations are working together towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 to reduce food loss and waste by half by 2030 compared to 2015.

Organisations supporting the foundation are: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature, Province of North Brabant, the Netherlands Nutrition Centre, Wageningen University & Research and the municipality of Meierijstad.



About the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste

The [International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste](#) is an initiative of the UN. The day helps to raise awareness and promote global efforts to achieve SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production). The basic premise is that reducing food loss and waste also has a positive impact on food security and food availability, contributing to more resilient food systems.

- In case of questions, please contact Manon Ensink, 06-51028023 or manon@samentegenvoedselverspilling.nl
- The attached photo of Gerda Verburg can be freely used

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