

Evaluation and control of food wastage at an University food unit

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Food service units at schools, universities, industry and hospitals need a complex management system involving several areas such as human resources, equipment and material, acquisition processes as well as financial and administrative management.

In order to allow the easier organization usually food units standardize the quantity of food served on meals, frequently not adequate for a significant part of users.

Food wastage, corresponding to the rest between foods prepared and not served.

The aim of this study was to evaluate the index between waste / consumption (IRI), by quantification of the number of served meals and food wastage an university food service unit.

The food unit serves 800 meals daily at lunch, including general menu, vegetarian and option. The work was developed during four weeks in order to allow the evaluation of parameters of an entire menu cycle. There were evaluated 22 days, 50% including meat and 50% fish in the general menu.

A convenience non probabilistic sample was used.

An Excel spreadsheet was created including food quantities prepared and wasted and the (IRI) was calculated.

The IRI was approximately 27%, average of 22 days, higher in the days with a fish menu (34%) and lower on meat menus days (22%) as expected.

According to Aragão (2003), these values are considered unacceptable since acceptable limit lies on 10%.

It was observed that each canteen user is served with approximately 860g of foods, from which only 620g are effectively consumed, corresponding to 70 g of food waste and 170g leftovers.

It seems that it is possible and desirable to reduce food wastage in order to optimize food unit productivity.

Potential strategies to achieve this goal may include the obligation booking meals previously, avoiding the disparity between estimated number of meals and the number of cooked meals, aiming to contribute for meals cost controlling.