

Press Kit - TASTE THE WASTE



**A documentary about global food waste
and what we can do about it.**



TASTE THE WASTE

A film by VALENTIN THURN

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THURNFILM SCHNITTSTELLE

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Production Data - TASTE THE WASTE

Original Title: Taste The Waste
Country of production: Germany
Language: German - French - English - Japanese - Italian
English Subtitles (also available with German, French or Spanish subtitles)

Year of Production: 2011
Genre: Documentary
Duration: 88 min
Format: 16:9
Standard: PAL
Original shooting format: XDCAM, HD
Editing format: Avid



Data - TASTE THE WASTE

Crew	Screenplay and Director	Valentin Thurn
	Cinematography	Roland Breitschuh
	Editor	Birgit Köster
	Music	Pluramon
	Sound	Ralf Gromann
	Sound Design	Peter Aufderhaar
	Production Manager	Astrid Vandekerkhove
	Production Assistant	Kadriye Acar
	Script Consultant	Sebastian Stobbe
	Digital Post-Production	FARBKULT
	Motion Graphics	agenturfuerkrankemedien
	Project Consultant Post-Production	Ewa Borowski
	Research	Karin de Miguel Wessendorf, Britta Dombrowe, Peter Dörrie, Thomas Hartmann, Daniela Baum
	Translation	Leigh Hoch
	Producers	Astrid Vandekerkhove Valentin Thurn
	Editorial Dept. WDR	Angelika Wagner, Andrea Ernst
	Editorial Dept. NDR	Dirk Neuhoff
	Editorial Dept. BOS (Netherlands)	Babeth M. VanLoo

In Co-Production with Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Norddeutscher Rundfunk,
Buddhist Broadcasting Foundation Netherlands,
KOCCA - Creativ Content Agency South Korea, CREO
Contents Südkorea, Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst / EZEF

In Co-Operation with SVT Sweden, NRK Norway, LRT Lithuania, TV3 Catalonia,
TG4 Irland, YLE Finnland, ERT Griechenland, TSR Schweiz,
France Television, DR Denmark, MBC South Korea

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Filmstiftung NRW

The Film - TASTE THE WASTE

Brief Synopsis A documentary about the worldwide destruction of food.
Why do we throw away so much?
And how can we stop this kind of waste?

Amazing but true: On the way from the farm to the dining-room table, more than half the food lands on the dump. Most of it before it ever reaches consumers. For instance every other head of lettuce or potato.

Why are ever-greater quantities being destroyed? We seek explanations: from supermarket sales staff and managers, from bakers, wholesale market inspectors, welfare recipients, ministers, farmers and EU bureaucrats. It's a system that we all take part in: Supermarkets constantly have the complete selection of merchandise on offer, the bread on the shelves has to be fresh until late in the evening and everything has to look just right: One withered leaf of lettuce, a crack in a potato or a dent in an apple and the goods are sorted out; containers of yogurt as early as two days before the 'sell by' date has expired.

Agriculture is responsible for more than a third of the greenhouse gases worldwide because farming requires energy, fertilizers and land. What's more, whenever food rots away at a garbage dump, methane escapes into the atmosphere, a climate gas with an effect 25 times as powerful as carbon dioxide. In other words, when we waste half of our food that has a disastrous impact on the world climate.

A documentary about global food waste and what we can do about it.



The Film - TASTE THE WASTE

Synopsis

Amazing but true: On the way from the farm to the dining-room table, more than half the food lands on the dump. Most of it before it ever reaches consumers. For instance every other head of lettuce or potato.

When it comes right down to it, no one actually thinks this is okay: Food is not something to be thrown away “because others have nothing to eat”, as younger people would say, and as for the elderly: “I was around during the war and we were glad to get our hands on every crust of bread!” That’s one side of the story. They discover the other side when they venture a look into dumpsters: behind their local supermarket and, if they can summon up enough courage, in the trash cans outside their own door. We’re not talking about chicken bones and potato peels here. The topic at hand is perfectly edible food, some still in the original packaging, and frequently enough not even the ‘best before’ date has expired. Around 100 pounds per household each year. Even more, about twice as much, is ‘rejected’ on fields, in factories and at retailers.



Why are ever-greater quantities being destroyed? We seek explanations: from supermarket sales staff and managers, from bakers, wholesale market inspectors, welfare recipients, ministers, farmers and EU bureaucrats. It’s a system that we all take part in: Supermarkets constantly have the complete selection of merchandise on offer, the bread on the shelves has to be fresh until late in the evening, strawberries are in demand at any time of the year. And everything has to look just right: One withered leaf of lettuce, a crack in a potato or a dent in an apple and the goods are sorted out; containers of yogurt as early as two days before the ‘sell by’ date has expired.

The Film - TASTE THE WASTE

Agriculture is responsible for more than a third of the greenhouse gases worldwide because farming requires energy, fertilizers and land. What's more, whenever food rots away at a garbage dump, methane escapes into the atmosphere, a climate gas with an effect 25 times as powerful as carbon dioxide. In other words, when we waste half of our food that has a disastrous impact on the world climate.



And on famine, too. My mother always reminded me to eat everything on my plate: "Children in Africa would be glad to have that food." We children never took her seriously. How were the leftovers on our plates supposed to get to African children? Yet my mother's statement proved to be as good as prophetic. The rising prices of wheat clearly illustrate the point: These days we buy our food on the same world market where developing countries buy theirs. If we threw away less and bought less as a result, the prices would drop and more would be left for the hungry.

We visited people who want to stop this incredible waste: "dumpster divers", scientific researcher, supermarket manager, potato farmer, Biogas plant operator and any more.

All of them are working together on a goal that offers a major opportunity: If we were to save merely half of the avoidable garbage, that would have the same effect on the world climate as when we took one out of four cars off our roads.

Interviewees - TASTE THE WASTE

Sylvain Sadoine (26), supermarket employee in Lille, France,

has to sort out yoghurt pots and other foods from the shelves every morning and throw them away which he really regrets doing.

Gerhard (35) and **Robert** (34) are dumpster divers out of conviction.

For the past ten years the two Viennese have mainly lived off the things other people throw away. For them it is not about free food but about protesting against the throwaway society.

Friedrich Wilhelm Graefe zu Baringdorf (67), farmer from Spenge, Westphalia,

has to sort out many potatoes already on the field because they are either too small, too big or have small defects. All in all, about half the crop is left behind in the field. He thinks this is wrong because the potatoes could still be eaten.

Annie Novak (34) operates the “Brooklyn Rooftop Farm” in New York City.

She harvests vegetables, honey and hen’s eggs with a view on Manhattan’s skyscrapers. Her personal credo: When you show the city-dwellers how nice it is to grow food themselves they will learn again to cherish their food.

Véronique Abouna Ndong (39) works at the Parisian Social and Solidarity Stores.

She picks edible foods from discarded products of the Parisian wholesaler Rungis which are then redistributed among people in need. She finds it incredible that she still has to dump many boxes of food which are labelled as not suitable for redistribution by the charity shop, although they are still edible. That would be unthinkable in her home country Cameroon.

Masahiro Koyama’s (40) restaurant in Yokohama was the first in the recycling-network “Hama-Pork”.

The chef collects leftovers of his restaurant and brings them to a factory, which supplies farmers with animal food. Their pork is then again delivered to the restaurant - a whole cycle inside the community of Yokohama, Japan.

Professor Joachim von Braun (60) works at the Centre for Development Research in Bonn

and points to the fatal connection of our wastage and the rise of global market prices for many foodstuffs at the cost of the poor. He thinks a hunger crisis like the one in 2008 is likely to repeat itself in the near future.

André Foka (64), small-scale farmer in Nyombé, Cameroon,

fighting against the largest banana plantation of the country, which has taken land from him and his neighbours. The proceedings have been delayed for the last 16 years. He is directly affected by any rise in prices at the wheat stock exchanges in Europe: the bread becomes more expensive and he has difficulties to feed his family.

Interviewees - TASTE THE WASTE

Jörn Franck (49) is the managing director of the biggest biogas plant in Hamburg.

As businessman he is pleased to see the amount of food waste increase from year to year. After a bit of probing however it becomes clear that he also is uncomfortable with this downside of the affluent society.

Roland Schüren (50) owns a bakery in Hilden.

He disposes of his “waste bread” by burning it. Better than dumping, he says. But dealing with the daily overproduction also made him thoughtful and he tries to produce less excess.

Tony Apfelbaum (55), waste-inspector at Parisian wholesaler Rungi

Every day he takes care of the disposal of many tons of fruits and vegetables which could not be sold. Much of it is not gone off. He shows an indifferent attitude, insensitive to the vast amounts of food which is thrown away on a daily basis.

Hilaire Tsimi Zoa (48), manager of the banana plantation PHP in Cameroon,

finds it regrettable that banana standards of European customers are tightening so that he has to throw away an increasing amount of his crop after harvesting it. He denies that his company has taken land from local farmers.

Felicitas Schneider (41), waste researcher at the Institute of Waste Management in Vienna,

searches the waste bins of households and supermarkets with her colleagues. She is shocked how much is thrown away, often in original packaging and even before the use-by date.

Timothy Jones (48) worked as a researcher at the University of Arizona in Tucson over more than ten years and studied the American waste bins until he threw in the towel and became an activist against the wasteful food industry. He is the founder of Food Corp., a cooperative where consumers become producers themselves and thereby avoid the market power of the food giants.

Valentin Thurn - TASTE THE WASTE

Biography

Born in 1963 in Stuttgart/Germany, married, three children. Director and author of TV documentaries with the national German channels ARD and ZDF, the French-German channel Arte, the international channels Deutsche Welle TV and Transtel, the regional channels SWR, WDR, NDR, BR, ORB and HR and the Swiss Television DRS.



2003: Foundation of the film production company THURN FILM, based in Cologne / Germany.

Author of radio features and articles for magazines such as Die Woche, Die Zeit, Natur & Kosmos, Merian. Publishing the books „WüstenErde“ on desertification, „Klassenfeind Natur“ on environment in Eastern Europe and the „Directory of Environmental NGO's in Central and Eastern Europe“.

Teaching at international congresses and workshops: Goethe Institute in Bombay / India, Foundation Miguel Alemán in Mexico City, Ecotourism congresses in Johannesburg / South Africa and Guayaquil / Ecuador, RTL Journalistenschule in Germany, Ecopresscenter in Macedonia, Third World Journalists Network in Germany, The Ethics in Economy Network of Germany, Fachhochschule Köln (University Cologne, Germany), International Congress of Investigative Journalists 2008 (Lillehammer/Norway).

Member of the founding board of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ) and Secretary General from 1993 until 2001. Member of Reporters without borders, Netzwerk Recherche (investigative reporter's network), AGDOK (German association of documentary filmmakers).

Filmography (excerpts)

- „The Whistleblower“ (German) (WDR 25. October 2010)
- „Innocent behind bars“ (German) ARD July 2009
- „A guide for life“ (German) ARD, May 2009
- „Battling the Superbugs“ (German, French, English) Arte, December 2008
- „Food for thought“ - Living from rubbish (German, English) WDR, May 2008
- „Sperm donor unknown“ - Anna is searching her father (German), WDR, May 2008
- „The pros and cons of vaccination“, arte November 2007
- „Not with my daughter!“ - Female Genital Circumcision in Europe (German, French, English), arte Febr. 2007
- „I am Al Qaeda“ - The Life Of Zacarias Moussaoui, arte, NDR August 2006
- „Violence in prison“ - Youngsters behind bars, WDR September 2007
- „My Baby in your Belly“ - The shady Surrogate-Business (German), ZDF May 2006
- „Poor Children in Rich Europe “ (German, French), Arte, 2006

Journalism Awards

Journalism Award of the Federation of Taxpayers in North-Rhine-Westphalia 2010 for the Radio feature "There is no scandal" (the affair of the fiscal investigation team in Frankfurt).

Nominee to the CNN Award 2009 for the Radio feature "Muslim, male, young" (about the Al Qaeda terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui).

Journalism Award of the ARGUS foundation 2008 for the TV documentary "Battling the Superbugs" (about MRSA and other hospital bacteria resisting to antibiotics).

The film "Not with my daughter!" has been awarded as "Best documentary" at the 2007 Filmfest Eberswalde, Germany, and with the "Gold Panda" at the 2007 Sichuan TV Festival in China.

The film "I am Al Qaeda" (The life of Zacarias Moussaoui) is nominated for the German TV Award (Deutscher Fernsehpreis 2006) in the category "best reportage", the ceremony will be broadcasted on October 20th during primetime in the First National Channel ARD.

The film „The Doctor, The Depleted Uranium And The Dying Children“ is awarded the "European Television Prize" at the 21st International Environmental Film Festival "Ökomeidia 2004".

The film „Papa loves a man“ is awarded the „Felix-Rexhausen-Preis“ of the German Union of Lesbian and Gay Journalists 2003.

The radio feature „Genes against hunger?“ is awarded the „2003 Medienpreis Entwicklungspolitik“ of the German Federal Ministry of Cooperation and Development Aid.

Geographical Journalism Award of the German Society of Geography in 2001 for reaching a broad audience with my films.

International Green Pen Award of the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists 1998.

The film „Clearcut in the taiga“ is awarded as the „most courageous film“ at the environmental film festival „Green Vision '97“ in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The films „Wismut: The radiating legacy“ and „Smog in Bohemia“ are awarded the „Prix Leonardo“ 1995 at the international film festival „Medikinale“ 1995 in Parma, Italy.

Interview - TASTE THE WASTE

How come you chose the topic "food waste"?

In 2007, I made a documentary about the dumpster divers, people living off food waste. At first it seemed to be an interesting but rather exotic topic. However, researching it I was stunned to realise the gigantic dimension of the amount of waste and its implications for the climate and global food security.

I already came into contact with the throwaway madness 30 years ago: on a cycling tour through England with a friend we were out of money at some stage. I was 18 at the time. We had a return ticket but didn't want to go back earlier. So we decided to get over the remaining nine days without any money. This is how I came to living off fruits and vegetables sorted out by a hypermarket in London- we had been given this hint from a homeless person living in the Docks, where we had set up our tent.

What was the biggest surprise when working on the film?

I was active in the environmental movement long before I started to professionally report on environmental topics as a TV journalist. It baffled me that no one - including myself, had a sense of this scale. Almost none of the environment, food or development organisations had an idea of the scale- and we are talking about organizations worldwide. Even the Food and Agriculture Organization FAO only had rough estimations. The only countries offering reliable figures are Austria and England. These figures stipulate that about 50 per cent of all foods are dumped - on their way from the fields to food processing, to the wholesalers and retailers, to the fridge to the plate.

The only German expert who knew answers to my questions was Joachim von Braun from the Centre for Development Research Bonn, who is in the film. He is aware of the topic because he is an advisor to the British government.

How did the project develop?

I participated in a project of "Documentary Campus" for international documentary co-productions, presented the topic there and carved out its potential. At the presentation at the DokFestival Leipzig, several broadcasters approached me, among them the ARD. And the European Broadcast Union invited us to a meeting of the association of broadcasters in Amsterdam and I was able to make further international contacts there. We were able to win over the Dutch and the South Koreans as co-producers. Meanwhile the film has been sold in 15 countries, among them France, Spain, Switzerland, Greece, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark.



Interview - TASTE THE WASTE

How come you made more than one film?

At the outset we thought about a documentary for the cinemas, but that is a high financial risk, especially when it is a debut film. Therefore we first produced a TV documentary with the title "Frisch auf den Müll" (*Fresh to the bin*). It provoked an overwhelming response in media, politics and among the viewers. A couple of days later, the film was even shown again at a much better time slot, which is quite extraordinary for the ARD.

Tomas Struck from "Kulinarisches Kino" of the Berlinale encouraged me saying: "This project has the potential to be on the big screens!" It was essential that NDR and WDR also co-produced the follow-up project and that W-Film quickly joined in as a committed film distributor.

What is the difference between the cinema film and the TV-documentary?

They are two individual films. It was only a quarter of the material for the cinema film that we used for the television documentary, most parts of it are still unseen. We use pictures which have been shot specifically for the large screen.

The power of these pictures and the statements of the protagonists tell the story, not an off-screen voice. The sound is completely different. To give an example: When fishen masse is dumped at the Parisian wholesaler, our sound design accompanies this with ocean murmur. Most importantly however, is the montage giving the film a unique rhythm and unfolding the topic in a completely new way.



What is special about a cinema film?

The cinema still is the supreme discipline. It is a magic place because it moves people. I have met many people who became really politicised by films like "We Feed the World". I am deeply impressed by the way films have these effects. I want to reach people emotionally- even though not as polemically, because that is not in my nature. There is a feeling of discontent with the wastage worldwide and I would like to give it a voice. In TV there is half the time and twice the facts which no one remembers. In cinema on the other hand, everyone remembers the atmosphere and the facts. This topic is special because everyone is somehow involved and can contribute to the

Interview - TASTE THE WASTE

solution. Viewers are not hopelessly confronted with an irreversible reality. Instead they can change it, and without losing any quality of life. I noticed that it is thought-provoking for everyone, as for our filming team for example. I have changed my way of shopping groceries, too.

What can the film do?

There are numerous requests for cooperation, which is quite remarkable. Many organisations from Attac and Greenpeace to Slow Food and Welthungerhilfe want to screen the film. The churches also do a lot when it comes to the topic integrity of creation and justice in the world. They can show the film at Thanksgiving or during Lent for example. The federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia has announced to become a role model in avoiding food waste. A lot has already been initiated and hopefully there is much more to come. As filmmaker this is what I wish for. I have been offered a lot of friendly words and positive resonance and not a single negative reaction.

How do you translate the title of the film?

“Taste the Waste” is a play on words which is complex and cannot be easily translated into German. My eleven-year-old son likes to translate the title with “Schmeck’ den Dreck” (*taste the rubbish*) because it rhymes. However it is not rubbish that is thrown away but highly nutritive food. This is why I favour the term “Erkenne die Verschwendung”, (*see the wastage*). Somewhere in between everyone finds their own interpretation. We also chose an English title in order to show that it is a global topic.

Festivals/Awards - TASTE THE WASTE

International Festivals

- Berlinale, Culinary Cinema, Germany, Febr. 2011
- CinemAmbiente, Environmental Film Festival, Torino, Italy, June 2011
- Seoul Int. Youth Film Festival, South Korea, July 2011
- Montreal World Film Festival, Canada, August 2011, Documentaries of the World section
- Cambridge Film Festival, UK, September 2011
- International Scientific Film Festival Szolnok, Hungary, September 2011
- Vancouver Film Fest, Canada, October 2011, series on the environment
- ECOFILM, Czech Republic, October 2011
- Beirut International Film Festival, Lebanon, Oct. 2011, culinary section
- Abu Dhabi Film Festival, United Arab Emirates, October. 2011
- SunChild International Environmental Festival, Armenia, October 2011
- ekotopfilm, International Festival of Sustainable Dev. Films, Slovak Republic, Oct. 2011
- Sichuan TV Festival, Panda Awards, Category Nature and Environment, China, Nov. 2011
- One World Film Festival, Berlin, Germany, November 2011
- Best of INPUT Film Festival, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, December 2011
- Santa Barbara International Film Festival, USA, February 2012
- Victoria Film Festival, Canada, February 2012
- Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital, Washington, USA, March 2012
- San Francisco Green Film Festival, USA, March 2012
- Green Film Festival in Seoul, Korea, May 2012
- UK Green Film Festival 2012, United Kingdom

Awards:

- Germany: Atlantis Environment- and Nature- Film Festival, Wiesbaden, Best Film 2011
- Czech Republic: 37. EKOFILM International Film Festival on the Environment and Natural and Cultural Heritage: Documentary Film Award 2011
- Slovak Republic: 38th International Festival of Sustainable Development Films - EKOTOPFILM 2011: GRAND PRIX EKOTOPFILM 2011 - Prize of the Government
- Armenia: SunChild Film Festival, Special mention in the Environmental Film Competition
- Romania: International Festival of Ecology and Environment Protection Films 2011, Grand Prix, Marele Premiu Eco Fest Oradea
- Hungary: Plaque of the International Scientific Film Festival 2011, Szolnok
- Germany: Environmental Media Award of the Deutsche Umwelthilfe 2011
- Belgium: Imagé Santé Festival, Liège, first prize in the Environment session

Team/Contact - TASTE THE WASTE

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