

4.8.1 Retail/Warehouse: Food Retail

Case Study #1

BUSINESS: Erickson's Diversified Corporation; Hudson, Wisconsin
WASTE ORIGIN: Grocery Store Operations
WASTE TYPES: Food Wastes, Energy Consumption, Refrigerants, Plastic Milk and Water Containers, and Construction Materials

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Erickson's is a privately held family- and employee-owned company. It has 1,500 employees in its 17 groceries and pharmacies in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

MOTIVATION

High waste volumes and associated disposal costs.

STRATEGIES

A grassroots approach to pollution prevention involves both customers and employees. Each of the 17 stores has a "environment and community" team to devise and implement waste-cutting programs. The grocer's weekly ad flyer contains a column offering consumer tips and encourages customers to recycle. To organize these efforts, Erickson's hired a director of environmental and community action.

NEW PROCESS:

Food waste is recycled to local pig farmers. Unsold bread and bakery items are donated to local charities. Customers are encouraged to use returnable milk and water containers. Energy management of lighting, heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration includes retrofitting stores with energy-efficient T8 fluorescent bulbs with electronic ballasts and reflectors. In 1994, Erickson's built their first model environmental grocery store using only T8 fluorescent lighting and the newest and environmentally-safest refrigerant available (R-404A) in its new cooling equipment.

RESULTS

Waste Reduction

Recycling food wastes has eliminated up to 30 percent of the waste stream in participating stores.

Lighting retrofits in three stores cut each store's energy use for lighting in half, saving 872,000 kilowatt hours annually (700 fewer tons of energy-generating pollutants in the air each year).

Economics (Information not available.)

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Case Study #2

BUSINESS: Sentry Foods/The Godfrey Company; Waukesha, Wisconsin
WASTE ORIGIN: Supermarket Chain Operations
WASTE TYPES: Office Materials (Paper, Aluminum Cans and Note Pads), Product Packaging (Cardboard Boxes), Customer Bags, Wooden Pallets, and Used Fleet Motor Oil

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Sentry Foods operates a chain of over 90 supermarkets throughout Wisconsin.

MOTIVATION

High waste volumes created expensive disposal costs.

STRATEGIES

Set up company-wide source reduction, materials reuse, and recycling programs for solid and hazardous wastes.

ORIGINAL PROCESS

Many stores landfilled large volumes of waste.

NEW PROCESS

Company offices separate all paper and aluminum cans from the waste stream and reuse waste paper for note pads. Recycled materials are purchased for use in private-label products and brown paper shopping bags. Reusable canvas shopping bags are promoted at checkout counters. Warehouse operations recycle corrugated cardboard and wooden pallets. Vehicle shops recycle used motor oil from Sentry's trucking/transportation fleet.

RESULTS

Waste Reduction

Reduced cardboard waste by 18,700 tons/year.

Reduced office paper waste by 58 tons/year.

Economics

Savings: Information not available.

Capital Cost: Sentry arranged for use of cardboard compactors provided by a recycling firm in exchange for all collected cardboard.

Operating/Maintenance Cost: Information not available.

Payback Period: Information not available.