University of Ottawa Directed Research Project Proposal – Fall 2018

Host organization:
Research and Analysis Directorate, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Supervisors:
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Project title:
Food Loss and Waste in Canada: Measurement and Reduction

Project description:
The environmental, economic and social consequences of food loss and waste (FLW) have implications beyond waste management. The ineffective use of land, energy, water and labor are just some of the outcomes of FLW that threaten the sustainability of a vital industry. Over one-third of all food produced globally for human consumption goes to waste. At the same time, close to one billion people are undernourished; while, in parts of the developed world, obesity is an increasing problem.

The critical importance of the FLW issues motivated different stakeholders to work on reducing FLW in Canada and in other parts of the world. In Canada, some governments are working on policies to reduce FLW. These (potential) policies would need to have some estimates of the current levels of FLW. Currently, there are no reliable estimates of the amounts of FLW in the Canadian food value chain because of issues related to measuring and reporting FLW. Sound measurement serves to better understand sources, quantities and reasons for FLW, and informs policies, programs and initiatives for enhanced reduction, recovery and diversion.

Several Canadian non-government organizations (NGOs) have taken some initiatives to reduce FLW. These initiatives focus on different area of Food Recovery Hierarchy. These initiatives have gained some public support in Canada. However, the effectiveness, challenges and impacts of these initiatives remain uninvestigated.

The purpose of this project is investigating the issues surrounding measuring FLW as well as shedding light on the governments and NGOs efforts in reducing FLW. The participating student will benefit from conducting this project in gaining experiences in policy research, writing research reports and communicating research results.
Student tasks and deliverables:

1) Research and analyze the issues related to measuring and reporting FLW in Canada.
2) Identify and investigate the governments and NGOs efforts in reducing FLW in Canada.
3) Write a report synthesizing research findings and providing a primer on perceptions of Canada’s FLW stakeholder on measuring and reducing FLW.

Essential qualifications:

- Good research and analysis skills
- Excellent writing skills
- Proficiency in MS Excel and ability to apply basic statistical techniques

Asset qualification:

- Basic knowledge of Canada’s food value chain