



Chick-fil-A: Sustainability in Corporate Fast Food

PJ Allan, Kelsey Ewing, Nathan Foster, and Justin Griffin

Background

- Chick-fil-A was created by Truett Cathy in 1960, with the first restaurant opening in 1967.
- Chick-fil-A has been committed to educating children and donating for their education.
- Chick-fil-A's sustainability efforts include:
 - Going antibiotic free by 2019
 - Building new LEED certified restaurants
 - Combating food waste by food donations
 - Converting Styrofoam cups, one of Chick-fil-A's biggest sustainability issues to benches, as well as trying to recycle these Styrofoam cups.



Antibiotic Free Chicken

- Announced in 2014, will be achieved by 2019, with the end result of Chick-fil-A's poultry becoming completely antibiotic free.
- Done by adding no antibiotics in chickens feed by suppliers.
- By 2016, 23% of Chick-fil-A's suppliers poultry was raised without antibiotics.
- If antibiotics are included by the supplier, the poultry must be removed from the supply chain.
- Chick-fil-A's suppliers are audited, and must maintain certification to supply poultry.

Top Chain Restaurant Antibiotics Policies & Sourcing Practices*

Grade	Restaurants
A	Chick-fil-A, The UPS Store
B	Chick-fil-A
C	Dunkin' Donuts, McDonald's
F	Wendy's, Burger King, Dairy Queen, KFC, Popeyes, Arby's, Sonic Drive-Ins, Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, Subway, Little Caesars, Domino's, IHOP, Outback, Chick-fil-A

Energy Efficiency

- Chick-fil-A has installed energy efficient light bulbs, water reducing fixtures and ENERGY STAR kitchen products.
- Chick-fil-A is in the top three fast food chains for LEED certified restaurants.
- Chick-fil-A was the first restaurant to have certified locations in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia.
- 1/3rd of Chick-fil-A's restaurants built in 2015 will be LEED Certified



Styrofoam Cups

- Beverage to Benches (Claims of Placing Burden on Environment)
 - Cleaned
 - Chopped up into bits
 - Extruded
 - Coal-bonded into logs
 - Sent into plastic recycling company with other materials
 - Assembled into park benches
- Problems with Beverage to Benches Campaign:
 - Burden put on consumers
 - One trash can per store for recyclables
 - Most cups are taken "on-the-go", thus not recycled
 - Use of Polystyrene



- What is Styrene?
 - "A colorless, toxic liquid with a strong aromatic odor. It is used to make rubbers, polymers and copolymers, and polystyrene plastics."
- Why is styrene/Styrofoam an issue?
 - Styrene can cause eye irritation, and long-term exposure can cause damage to the Central Nervous System for humans.
 - Styrofoam is also littered throughout the environment choking animals and other wildlife, because they eat it.
 - Takes an extraordinary amount of time to decompose.

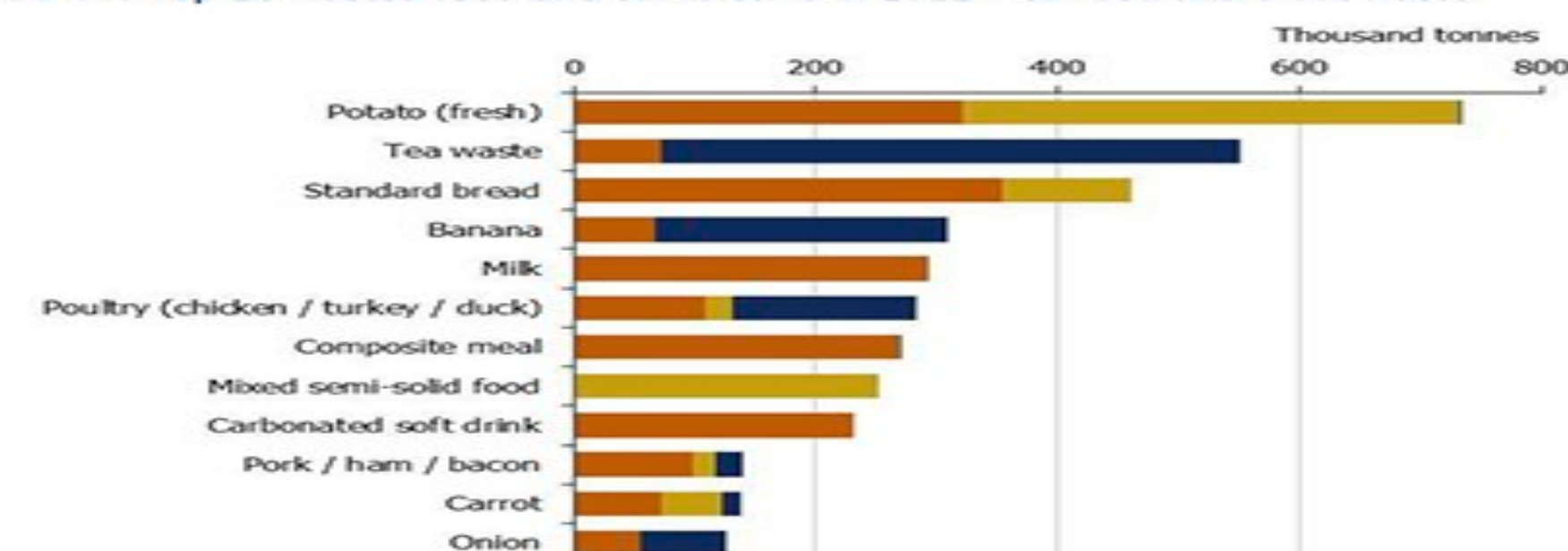
Object	Decomposition Time
Styrofoam container	> 1 million years
Plastic jug	1 million years
Aluminum can	200-500 years
Disposable diaper	550 years
Tinned can	90 years
Leather shoe	45 years
Wool sock	1 year
Paper bag	1 month
Banana peel	3-4 weeks

• Polystyrene takes a long time to decompose, and most of this goes to landfills (82.2%), and the rest goes to incinerators (17.8%). Incinerators are dangerous because by burning the waste dangerous chemicals are sent into the atmosphere. Landfills are not a better option because the product takes so many years to decompose.

Food Waste

• Food Waste is a big issue at Chick-fil-A, but it is a sustainability issue throughout the restaurant industry.

Figure 44: Top 20 wasted food and drink items in 2012 – all food and drink waste



• The graph above shows potatoes, tea, bread, and chicken are near the top of the statistics for wasted food. Potatoes, which include Chick-fil-A's famous waffle fries were the leading cause of food waste in the year of 2012.

Food Waste

- Chick-fil-A has taken steps to reduce their waste by donating food to people of need, heroes, or other charity events, which include:
 - Donating food for disaster relief.
 - Feeding military personnel and first responders.
 - Donating food to children's hospitals.
 - Donating to schools and various charity events.
 - Or, helping a family in need.
- "In alignment with Food Donation Connection, many Chick-fil-A local franchise owners donate surplus food weekly to community groups who feed those who are in need. With support provided by a national food donation company, a growing number of Chick-fil-A restaurants and even our home office in Atlanta are able to donate food each week."
- "Since August of 2005, we have collectively donated 618,000 pounds of surplus food that would have otherwise been wasted with an average each restaurant donating 40-50 pounds per week. This helps serve 56,000 meals and growing!"



Improvements

- Chick-fil-A can follow the leaders of the food industry in regards to sustainable packaging
 - Such as Chipotle, using recycled content in packaging.
- Donate leftover food from stores every night to local shelters.
- Replace waste bins with compost and recycling bins, low number of trashcans.
- Find compostable sites/farms to take compostable waste to, helping local communities every step of the way.
- Another solution could be to use this compostable food waste for nourishing Chick-fil-A's own gardens on the site of their restaurants.
- Chick-fil-A can also use green roofs which can also be used for roof gardens, or perhaps Chick-fil-A can use their roofs for solar panels on the top of their franchises.
- We suggest for Chick-fil-A to completely rid of their Styrofoam cups. A better option is for Chick-fil-A to use compostable plastic cups, or recyclable plastic cups.
- Finally, Chick-fil-A should have sustainability auditors.
 - These visits can be an sustainability auditor who make sure that Chick-fil-A's franchise owners are adhering to the company's sustainable standards. This auditor will check on the franchises water efficiency, energy efficiency, and also how the specific restaurant handles their waste.

