

# MIDWEST FOOD RECOVERY SUMMIT 2017



December  
2017

Final Report

Prepared by the Iowa Waste Reduction Center  
at the University of Northern Iowa

# Midwest Food Recovery Summit 2017

## FINAL REPORT

## BACKGROUND

On September 6-8, 2017, the Iowa Waste Reduction Center (IWRC) at the University of Northern Iowa held the first ever Midwest Food Recovery Summit in Des Moines, IA. The goal of the summit was to bring a comprehensive food waste reduction, recovery, and recycling event directly to the Midwest.

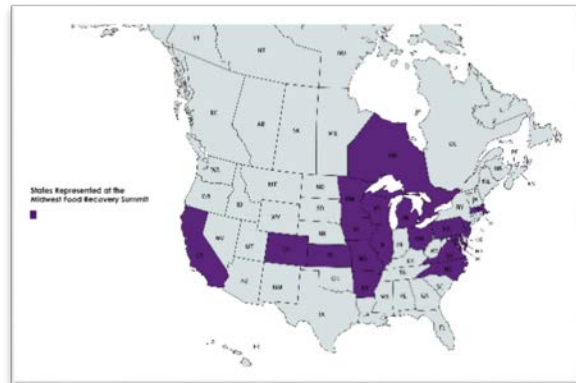
## THE SUMMIT

The summit took place over two-and-a-half days at the Des Moines Downtown Marriott in September 2017. The full agenda was comprised of two keynote presentations, 17 breakout sessions, a concluding roundtable discussion, and two events, the Innovator Lightning Round and Saving Scraps: A Culinary Competition. The full agenda is included in Appendix A at the end of this report.

Additionally, the summit was supported by three partner organizations, four sponsor organizations, and 14 exhibiting organizations/companies. A complete list of all the supporting organizations and/or companies is included in Appendix B.

## Attendees

In total, there were 139 registered attendees for the 2017 Midwest Food Recovery Summit representing 102 different organizations, businesses, and/or agencies. Those attendees came from 18 states (as well as Washington D.C. and Ontario, Canada) and a wide variety of industries.



## Industries of Attendees

- Education (K-12 schools, colleges, universities)
- Non-profits and associations
- Conservation center
- Restaurants and breweries
- Consultants

- Engineering firms
- Government and regulatory officials (Local, regional, national)
- Solid waste operators
- Solid waste haulers
- Manufacturers

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AT THE SUMMIT

One of the primary sustainability methods was to utilize a mobile application rather than the traditional printed conference booklet. Not only did the app allow the IWRC to provide detailed information about speakers and the agenda, but it allowed for changes and updates to be made during the event and it gave attendees the opportunity to network with each other and customize their own schedule. Read more about how the app was used in the next section.

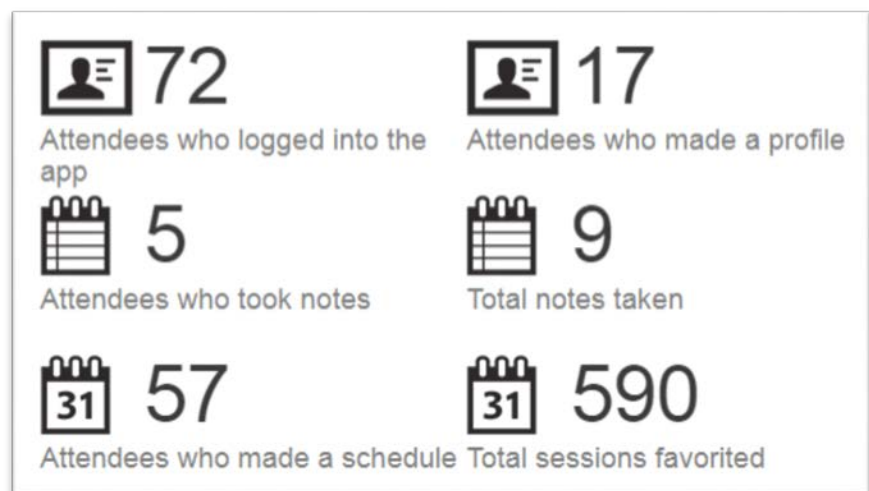
Other sustainability efforts put into place at the Midwest Food Recovery Summit include:

- Name badges printed on seed paper and could be planted to grow carrots, lettuce, or tomatoes
- All food waste at the event was composted and/or used for Saving Scraps: A Culinary Competition
- Compostable plates and bowls were provided during breaks, courtesy of Chamness Biodegradables
- Des Moines Marriott Downtown uses all non-disposable plates, cups, and silverware
- Recycling bins were located throughout the venue

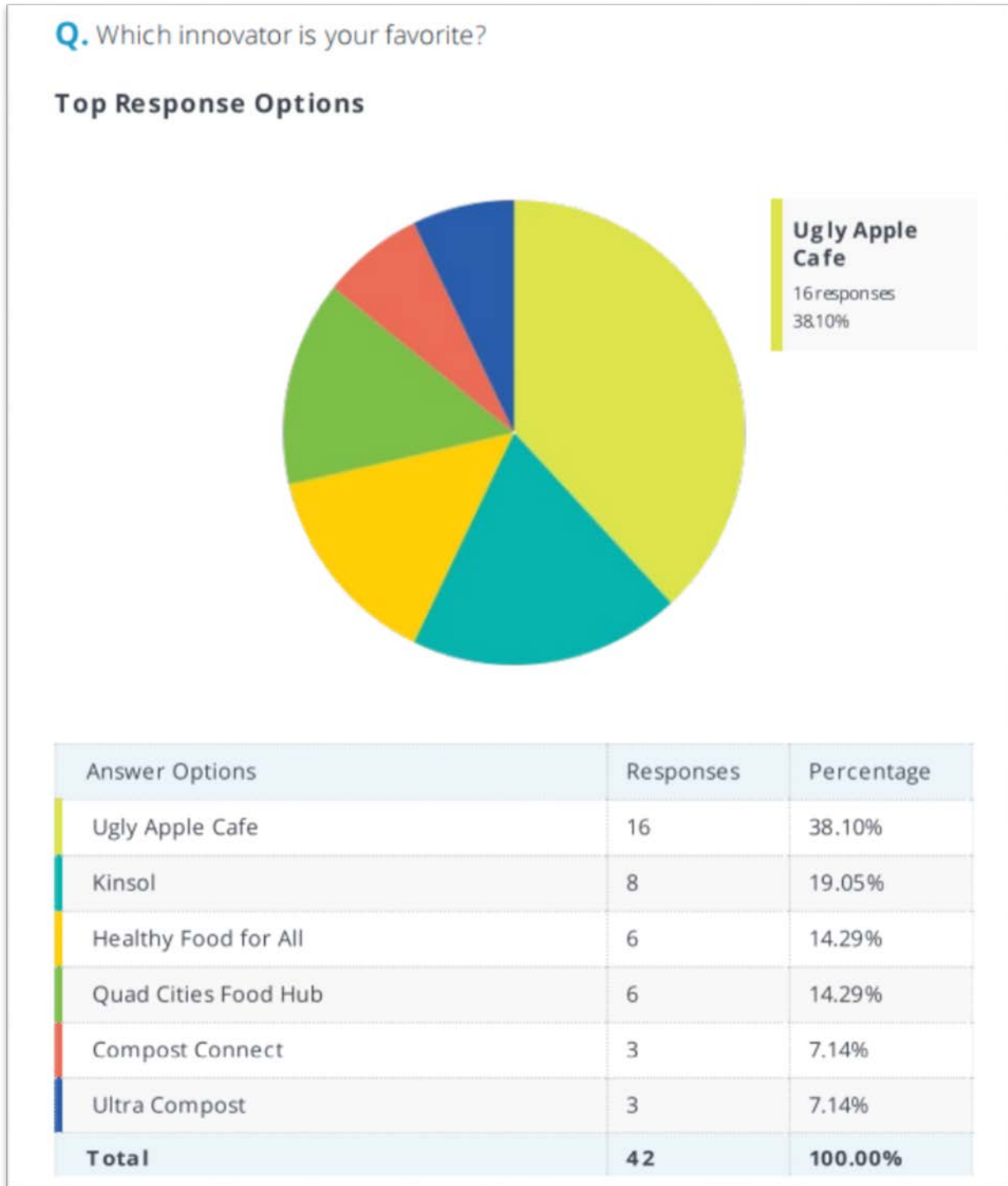
## Mobile App

As the replacement for the traditional printed conference booklet, the app was available as a standalone app downloadable from Google Play and the App Store, and it was also accessible via any internet browser.

Analytics regarding the use of the mobile app are to the right. Additionally, the total page views over the course of the event were 6,884 with 97 unique visitors. The most commonly used modules, in order from most viewed, were Agenda, Speakers, and Attendees.



The top agenda item viewed was the Innovator Lightning Round, and for good reason. After all of the innovators presented, the attendees were invited to vote in a live poll. In total, 42 attendees participated in the live poll as shown below.



## OUTCOMES

After the summit, all attendees, exhibitors, partners, and sponsors were sent a comprehensive survey to gauge the effectiveness of the summit in meeting its goals, as well as providing the opportunity to rate individual parts of the summit.

In total, the survey had 53 responses and in terms of meeting the summit goal, 100% of the responses said they would be 'implementing and/or increasing food waste reduction, recover, or recycling efforts.'

The overall summit experience was rated at 4.81/5.0 with the highest rated portion of the summit being the Innovator Lightning Round at 4.90/5.0. Other relevant analytics include:

- Keynote Presentations as a Whole = 4.67/5.0
- Breakout Sessions as a Whole = 4.78/5.0
- Culinary Competition = 4.62/5.0
- Pre-Summit Communications and Organization = 4.84/5.0
- Interaction and Communication with Staff During the Event = 4.90/5.0

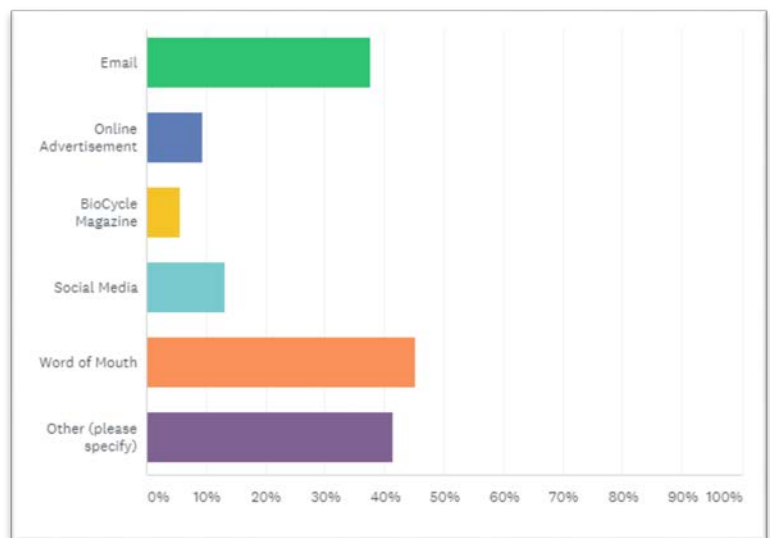
Additionally, the overall social media reach through the Iowa Waste Reduction Center's Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn was 81,500 with 819 views of videos via Facebook Live and summit presentation videos available on YouTube, as of November 30, 2017.

Lastly, to conclude the 2017 Midwest Food Recovery Summit a roundtable discussion was held with 25 participants to look at the challenges and barriers to food waste reduction, recovery, and/or recycling. Participants included attendees from state and federal regulatory sectors, non-profits, small businesses, consultants, and those from within the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors. Notes from the discussion are included in Appendix C at the end of this report.

## Additional Survey Results

In analyzing the overall efforts for the marketing and promotion of the Midwest Food Recovery Summit, the most common method in which attendees learned about the event was through word of mouth. And many of the 'Other' responses specifically mentioned particular people that tell the attendees about the summit, which also gets categorized as word of mouth.

The survey also provided the opportunity for the summit planning committee to get insight into what attendees would be able



to do as a result of attending the 2017 Midwest Food Recovery Summit. The question asked was, “Based on the information you learned at the summit and the people you met, will you be implementing and/or increasing any food waste reduction, recovery, or recycling efforts? Please explain below.” Overwhelmingly, the response was yes. A sample of the responses are included below and additional general comments are included in Appendix D at the end of this report.

*“Yes, we are continually looking for ways to be more efficient in our work and draw in more donors. Ideas I learned at the summit will help in that planning.”*

*“Yes – we made many connections and will be partnering with attendees to increase food recovery efforts in Iowa.”*

*“Yes, I will be looking for ways to use the food recovery apps I heard about in my town.”*

*“While we have already been exploring new technologies/apps to increase our food rescue capacity, the summit provided some nice examples of how other food rescues have used new technology to streamline their processes.”*

*“I am hopeful we can interest other zoological businesses in working to reduce waste, implement more aggressive composting, and consider other measures.”*

*“Hopefully! I was excited to learn about the Compost Connection program and have reached out to some potential local groups who could replicate the program locally.”*

*“Yes, hearing from some of the other innovators, I will be incorporating more of Ugly Apple’s techniques.”*

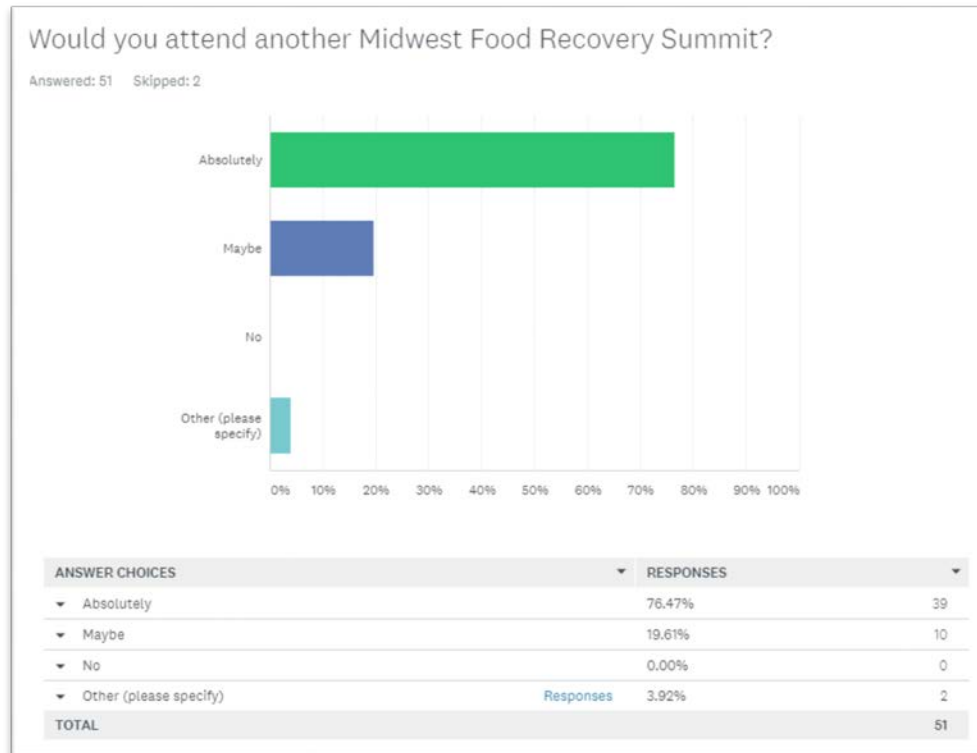
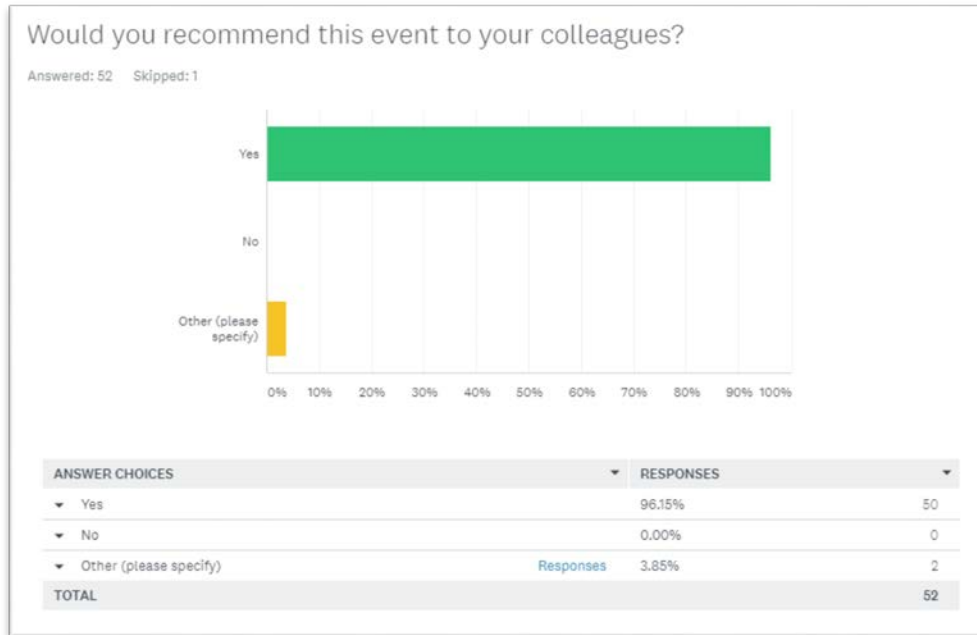
*“Yes. We will revive our participation in the EPA’s Food Waste Reduction Challenge. We will expand our partnership with food recovery organizations to put our edible food to higher use than composting.”*

*“I hope to use the information I gained at the summit to help educate my program clients and foster more food waste recovery and recycling.”*

*“We will be looking into several options to network food donors and potential recipients. We will also share school lunchroom tactics with our local education partners.”*

*“Yes, we have no discovered unique approaches others are using, in order to educate the masses on food waste.”*

Two of the higher importance questions that were included in the survey were “Would you recommend this event to your colleagues?” and “Would you attend another Midwest Food Recovery Summit?” You can see the survey results below.



Following the question of if attendees would attend another Midwest Food Recovery Summit was the opportunity to provide topics or themes they would like to be addressed if future events were held. Responses are included in Appendix E at the end of the report.

## Content Library

While the summit itself had a set time span, the content that was created as a result of the summit can and will continue to be used on an ongoing effort.

All of the presentations given by keynote speakers, breakout speakers, and innovators are available on the IWRC website. Additionally, a majority of the breakout sessions were recorded and those videos are available for anyone to view, as mentioned earlier in the Outcomes sections. Below are links to access all of these materials.

- [Midwest Food Recovery Summit 2017](#)
  - Access full speaker list, agenda, and presentation PDF's
- [Midwest Food Recovery Summit Video Playlist](#) (YouTube)
- [Midwest Food Recovery Summit 2017 Photo Gallery](#) (Facebook)
- [Saving Scraps: A Culinary Competition 2017 Photo Gallery](#) (Facebook)

## Intangible Benefits

Aside from the quantitative results, a primary qualitative outcome from the Midwest Food Recovery Summit was centered on the networking opportunities. The event created the means for people in the Midwest that would have never crossed paths to connect and learn from each other, whether that be across industries or just from different geographic regions.

Additionally, hosting it in Des Moines brought economic benefit to the city by having 114 attendees coming from outside the metro area utilizing the airport, staying in area hotels, and being patrons of local restaurants and bars throughout the two and a half days of the event.



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# APPENDIX A

## Agenda

### Wednesday, September 6

- 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Welcome and Opening Keynote Presentation
  - Karen Flournoy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
  - Laura Moreno, University of California - Berkeley
  - *Moderated by Dan Nickey, Iowa Waste Reduction Center, University of Northern Iowa*
- 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. - Lunch
- 1:00 - 1:45 p.m. - Exhibit Hall Opening
- 1:45 - 3:00 p.m. - Breakout Sessions
  - Recovery and Donation Tax Deductions and Food Date Labeling Policies
    - Christine Beling, U.S. EPA Region 1
    - Christina Rice, Food Law and Policy Clinic of Harvard Law School
    - *Moderated by Gayle Hubert, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
  - Food Waste Solutions in the Industrial and Commercial Sector
    - Bruce Taylor, Enviro-Stewards
    - Aleks Poldma, Enviro-Stewards
    - Michele Boney, West Liberty Foods
    - Dave Morgan, SingleSpeed Brewing Co.
    - *Moderated by Joe Bolick, Iowa Waste Reduction Center, University of Northern Iowa*
  - Students and Inmates - Programs and Initiatives to Promote Recovery, Donation, and Education
    - Joshua Becker, U.S. Department of Agriculture
    - Suzy DeYoung, La Soupe
    - Scott Koepke, Grow Johnson County
    - *Moderated by Susan Vescovi, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
- 3:00 - 3:30 p.m. - Break & Snacks (Des Moines Exhibit Hall)
- 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. - Breakout Sessions
  - Battle Creek, Michigan - A Municipal Initiative to Become the Nation's First Test Market to Treat Food Waste as a Resource
    - Bill Schroer, WJS Schroer Co.
    - Brendan McCrann, Blue Terra Waste Solutions
    - Carl Fedders, City of Battle Creek, MI
    - Michael McFarlen, FireKeepers Casino Hotel
    - *Moderated by Barb Goode, Kansas State Pollution Prevention Institute*
  - Composting Case Studies

- Jen Jordan, Iowa City Landfill and Recycling Center
- Jason Evans, Cedar Rapids / Linn County Solid Waste Agency
- Kevin Anderson, Missouri Organics
- Public Awareness and Public Programs Promoting Food Waste Reduction Initiatives
  - Brian Roe, The Ohio State University
  - Christina McDonough, Food Rescue Partnership
  - Jenna Segal, U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - *Moderated by Julie Schilf, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
- 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. - Social Hour / Networking

## Thursday, September 7

- 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. - Breakfast
- 9:00 - 10:15 a.m. - Breakout Sessions
  - Anaerobic Digestion Initiatives and the State of AD Regionally and Nationally
    - Royce Hammitt, Consultant
    - Shelly Peterson, Iowa Economic Development Authority
    - Bryan Sievers, AgriReNew
    - *Moderated by Jenny Trent, Iowa Waste Reduction Center, University of Northern Iowa*
  - Colleges and Universities Making a Dent in Food Waste
    - Jay Kahn, Central Michigan University
    - Daniel Wildcat, Haskell University
    - Hannah Cather, Food Recovery Network
    - Nicole Edmonds, Michigan State University
    - *Moderated by Lana Suarez, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
  - Tools and Resources to Promote Recovery and Donation Efforts
    - Patrick Bultema, Food Maven
    - Harini Aiyer, Compost Connect
    - Allie Wilson, MEANS Database
    - *Moderated by Susan Vescovi, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
- 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. - Break & Snacks
- 10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Breakout Sessions
  - Technology Fostering Sustainable Uses of Food Waste
    - Hunt Briggs, RRS
    - Brendan McCrann, Blue Terra Waste Solutions
    - Michael Keleman, InSinkErator
    - *Moderated by Liz Blackburn, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
  - K-12 Case Studies
    - Ann Gritzner, Central Community School District
    - Craig Wood, Johnson County, KS
    - Melissa Terry, University of Arkansas

- Joan Leavens, Shawnee Mission School District
  - *Moderated by Joe Bolick, Iowa Waste Reduction Center, University of Northern Iowa*
- Food by the Numbers - Measurement, Tracking, and Data
  - Jen Jordan, Iowa City Landfill and Recycling Center
  - Lynette Johnson, Society of St. Andrew
  - Metin Cakir - University of Minnesota
  - Stephanie Katsaros, Bright Beat
  - *Moderated by Julie Schiff, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
- 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. - Lunch
- 1:00 - 2:15 p.m. - Innovator Lightning Round (Iowa Ballroom)
  - Chris Brockel, Healthy Food for All (Madison, WI)
  - Mikayla Sullivan, Kinosol (Ames, IA)
  - Laurel Burleson, Ugly Apple Cafe (Madison, WI)
  - Harini Aiyer, Compost Connect (Milwaukee, WI)
  - Liz Hogan, Quad Cities Food Hub (Davenport, IA)
  - Jodi & Lee Wulfekuhle, Ultra Compost (New Vienna, IA)
- 2:15 - 2:45 p.m. - Break & Snacks
- 2:45 - 3:30 p.m. - Keynote Presentation
  - Mindy Stinner, Conservators Center
  - *Moderated by Jenny Trent, Iowa Waste Reduction Center, University of Northern Iowa*
- 3:30 - 4:45 p.m. - Breakout Sessions
  - Packaging and Spoil Prevention to Prevent Food Waste - VIDEO REPLAY
    - Rachel Morier, PAC Packaging Consortium
    - Dr. Thomas Bierma, Illinois State University
    - *Moderated by Penny Harrell, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
  - Grocery Stores and Hospitals Implementing Techniques to Reduce Wasted Food
    - Misty Cavanaugh, Dillon Food Stores
    - Barb Goode, Kansas State University Pollution Prevention Institute
    - Laurie Kroymann, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics
    - Chris VanScoy, UnityPoint Health
    - Daniel Frost, UnityPoint Health
    - *Moderated by Lisa Thresher, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
  - Tools and Resources to Identify Surplus Food and Recipients
    - Aubrey Alvarez, Eat Great Des Moines
    - Andrea Schnitzer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
    - *Moderated by Ellen Meyer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
- 4:45 - 5:15 p.m. - Social Hour / Networking
- 5:30 - 7:30 p.m - Saving Scraps: A Culinary Competition

## Friday, September 8

- 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Breakout Session
  - Results of K-12 School Cafeteria Audits in Iowa
    - Jenny Trent, Iowa Waste Reduction Center
    - Shelly Codner, Iowa Waste Exchange
    - Jennifer Wright, Iowa Department of Natural Resources
    - *Moderated by Barb Goode, Kansas State Pollution Prevention Institute*
- 10:00 - 10:45 a.m. Breakout Session
  - Anaerobic Digestion at Wastewater Treatment Plants and On the Farm
    - Paul Ebert, Des Moines Metro Wastewater
    - Jon Koch, City of Muscatine
    - *Moderated by Jenny Trent, Iowa Waste Reduction Center, University of Northern Iowa*
- 10:45 - 11:00 a.m. - Break
- 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Roundtable Discussion with Call to Action Closing

## APPENDIX B

### Supporting Organizations and/or Companies

#### Partner Organizations

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- BioCycle Magazine

#### Sponsors

- Chamness Biodegradables / GreenRU
- iTracking Research
- Iowa Society of Solid Waste Operations
- Center for Business Growth and Innovation
- UNI College of Business

#### Exhibitors

- Chamness Biodegradables / GreenRU
- Clarke Energy
- Eat Greater Des Moines
- Food Rescue Partnership
- IASourceLink
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Recycling Association
- Kinosol
- Plexus Recycling Technologies
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- UNI Business and Community Services
- Vogelsang USA

## APPENDIX C

### Roundtable Discussion Notes

Attendees that participated in the concluding roundtable discussion at the 2017 Midwest Food Recovery Summit were separated into two groups to simultaneously discuss the challenges and barriers to food waste reduction, recovery, and/or recycling from their perspective, as well as discuss call to action options to overcome those challenges and barriers.

#### Challenges and Hurdles

- Regulations
- Awareness, motivation, dedicated staff
- Transportation (high cost)
- Low LF cost
- Legislation (or lack thereof)
- Behavior
- Priorities, culture
- Lack of financial consequence
- Unseen costs of food waste along life cycle/food system
- Lack of tech assist or support
- Lack of funds
- False perceptions
- Fear
- Conflicting policies
- Economic knowledge to reduce at the source
- Individual priorities
- Lack of economic incentives to create a better environment
- No recycling requirement
- Lack of leaders (“champion”)
- “Ick” factor
- Lack of long-term studies
  - No money for implementation
  - Staff for follow up
  - Conflicting priorities

#### Calls to Action

- Coordinate volunteers for food delivery and pickup
- Reusable containers for food donation
- Create regional focus on donation
- Create education materials for outreach
- Promote interactive apps/maps for donation
- Review state legislation to get in better alignment
  - Example: feeding animals legislation - making it consistent and clear definitions
- Share tables at schools
- Create a one-stop shop for food guides and resources
- Convene meetings of stakeholders to resolve issues
- Use social media on trending topics
- Learn first-hand the issues we face
- Focus on all sizes of sports venues to donate food unserved (not just national sports, but smaller venues as well)
- Create a LOCAL system to include infrastructure and staff to move food to those in need
- Identify funding sources
  - Measure SORI

- Environmental Impact Calculator (Habitat for Humanity)
  - Sheri Chaney Jones (Impact & Excellence Measurement)
- Incentive Program
- Award
- Certification
- “Yellow Lid” Program
- Forge partnerships
- Make things easy
- Build networks
- Funding and resources
- Consistent guidelines for organics management
- Need commitment and long-term goals (company culture and government level)
- Coordination among local governments and communities
- More states adopt the tax credit for food donation
- More opportunities for networking and problem solving
- More general public involvement to learn what all roles are and how/who to work with
- Every school should have a pantry
- A better cultural understanding of food and behaviors (how people relate to food)
- More education from states on how to locate compost facilities
- Compost operator training

## APPENDIX D

### Additional Attendee Testimonials and Comments

*"It was AWESOME! Way to go. Thanks for bringing this caliber of event to the Midwest."*

*"Great conference! I really hope this can be an annual event."*

*"Great job incorporating limited waste! It was very thoughtful and I'm impressed by the amount of effort that went into the event (e.g. name tags, app, innovator round, cooking competition)."*

*"I was impressed with the planning and organization of the conference. The keynote speakers, presenters for the breakout sessions, and participants in the Lighting Round were all. I don't know how they were found and selected but I am impressed. Excellent job in the first year! I would be honored to speak and attend again at future Midwest Food Recovery Summits."*

*"I had three people from three different states come up to me after my presentation and that's all you can ask for."*

*"Great ideas and inspiring! I have brought back some ideas to the landfill and other organizations that I am part of in the area."*

*"I felt the event was a great success! I spoke to several who were attending this type of event for the first time. To me, that meant we were expanding our networks and reaching out to new participants in this dialogue! Congratulations!"*

*"I think a lot of folks who didn't attend really missed out on a great opportunity. You all should be commended on how well the structure of the conference was built. Great idea having the innovators speak and "force" the attendees to participate after lunch on Thursday. I'd like to see more of this for other conferences I attend."*



## APPENDIX E

### Topics or Themes for Future Events

In the post-summit survey, attendees had the opportunity to provide topics or themes they would like to be addressed if future events were held.

- Biomass
- Feeding Animals
- Excess Farm Production
- Food Banks and Anti-Hunger Coalitions
- Front End of Food Recovery
- Funding
- Technologies Available
- Food Recovery from Retail Grocers
- Building Grassroots Organizations
- Biodigestion
- Reducing Waste on Restaurant Level
- Post-Consumer, Public Space Compost Collection
- Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)
- Food Solids Treatment
- Tools for Implementing Behavior Change
- Specific Workshops for Specific Industry Types
- USDA 2018 Farm Bill
- Local, State, and National (or Regional) Policy
- Indoor Farming Technologies
- Midwest Agriculture
- K-12 and Universities